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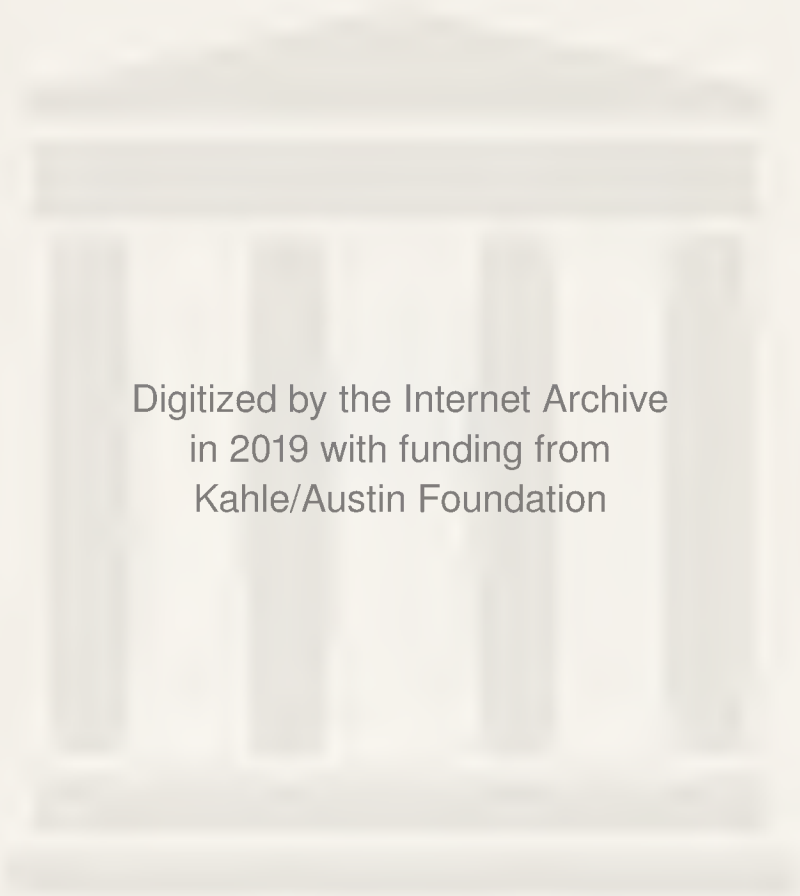

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THE LATER YEARS
OF
THOMAS HARDY

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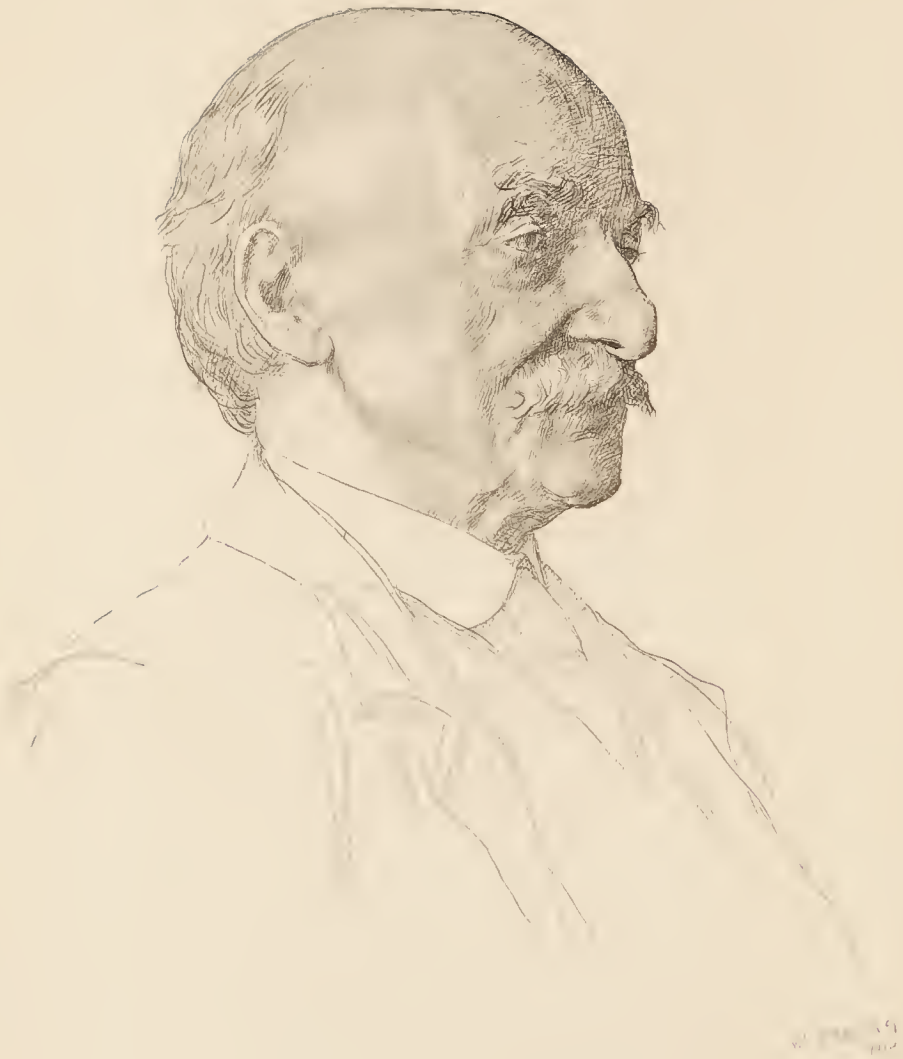

Thomas Hardy

from a drawing by W. Strang R.A.
in the National Portrait Gallery

THE LATER YEARS OF
THOMAS HARDY
1892—1928

BY

FLORENCE EMILY HARDY

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1930

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PETERBOROUGH, ONT.

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THE present volume forms the second and concluding part of a biography, the first part being *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*, published in 1928.

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PART I

TESS, JUDE, AND THE END OF PROSE

CHAPTER I

THE RECEPTION OF THE BOOK

1892: *Aet.* 51–52

As *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* got into general circulation it attracted an attention that Hardy had apparently not foreseen, for at the time of its publication he was planning something of quite a different kind, according to an entry he made:

"Title:—'Songs of Five-and-Twenty Years'. Arrangement of the songs: Lyric Ecstasy inspired by music to have precedence."

However, reviews, letters, and other intelligence speedily called him from these casual thoughts back to the novel, which the tediousness of the alterations and restorations had made him weary of. From the prefaces to later editions can be gathered more or less clearly what happened to the book as, passing into great popularity, an endeavour was made by some critics to change it to scandalous notoriety—the latter kind of clamour, raised by a certain small section of the public and the press, being quite inexplicable to the writer himself.

Among other curious results from the publication of the book was that it started a rumour of Hardy's theological beliefs, which lived, and spread, and grew, so that it was never completely extinguished. Near the end of the story he had used the sentence, "The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess", and the first five words were, as Hardy often explained to his

reviewers, but a literal translation of Aesch. *Prom.* 169: Μακάρων πρύτανις. The classical sense in which he had used them is best shown by quoting a reply he wrote thirty years later to some unknown critic who had said in an article:

"Hardy postulates an all-powerful being endowed with the baser human passions, who turns everything to evil and rejoices in the mischief he has wrought"; another critic taking up the tale by adding: "To him evil is not so much a mystery, a problem, as the wilful malice of his god."

Hardy's reply was written down but (it is believed), as in so many cases with him, never posted; though I am able to give it from the rough draft:

"As I need hardly inform any thinking reader, I do not hold, and never have held, the ludicrous opinions here assumed to be mine—which are really, or approximately, those of the primitive believer in his man-shaped tribal god. And in seeking to ascertain how any exponent of English literature could have supposed that I held them I find that the writer of the estimate has harked back to a passage in a novel of mine, printed many years ago, in which the forces opposed to the heroine were allegorized as a personality (a method not unusual in imaginative prose or poetry) by the use of a well-known trope, explained in that venerable work, Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, as 'one in which life, perception, activity, design, passion, or any property of sentient beings, is attributed to things inanimate'.

"Under this species of criticism if an author were to say 'Aeolus maliciously tugged at her garments, and tore her hair in his wrath', the sapient critic would no doubt announce that author's evil creed to be that the wind is 'a powerful being endowed with the baser human passions', etc., etc.

"However, I must put up with it, and say as Parrhasius

of Ephesus said about his pictures: There is nothing that men will not find fault with."

The deep impression produced on the general and uncritical public by the story was the occasion of Hardy's receiving strange letters—some from husbands whose experiences had borne a resemblance to that of Angel Clare, though more, many more, from wives with a past like that of Tess, but who had *not* told their husbands, and asking for his counsel under the burden of their concealment. Some of these were educated women of good position, and Hardy used to say the singular thing was that they should have put themselves in the power of a stranger by these revelations (their names having often been given, though sometimes initials at a post-office only), when they would not trust persons nearest to them with their secret. However, they did themselves no harm, he would add, for though he was unable to advise them, he carefully destroyed their letters, and never mentioned their names, or suspected names, to a living soul. He owed them that much, he said, for their trust in his good faith. A few, too, begged that he would meet them privately, or call on them, and hear their story instead of their writing it. He talked the matter over with his friend Sir Francis Jeune, who had had abundant experience of the like things in the Divorce Court, where he presided, and who recommended him not to meet the writers alone, in case they should not be genuine. He himself, he said, also got such letters, but made it a rule never to notice them. Nor did Hardy, though he sometimes sadly thought that they came from sincere women in trouble.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles was also the cause of Hardy's meeting a good many people of every rank during that spring, summer, and onwards, and of opportunity for meeting a good many more if he had chosen to avail himself of it. Many of the details that follow concerning his

adventures in the world of fashion at dinner-parties, crushes, and other social functions, which Hardy himself did not think worth recording, have been obtained from diaries kept by the late Mrs. Hardy.

It must be repeated that his own notes on these meetings were set down by him as private memoranda only; and that they, or some of them, are reproduced here to illustrate what contrasting planes of existence he moved in —vibrating at a swing between the artificial gaieties of a London season and the quaintnesses of a primitive rustic life.

Society remarks on *Tess* were curious and humorous. Strangely enough, Lord Salisbury, with whom Hardy had a slight acquaintance, was a supporter of the story. Also: "The Duchess of Abercorn tells me that the novel has saved her all future trouble in the assortment of her friends. They have been almost fighting across her dinner-table over Tess's character. What she now says to them is 'Do you support her or not?' If they say 'No indeed. She deserved hanging. A little harlot!' she puts them in one group. If they say 'Poor wronged innocent!' and pity her, she puts them in the other group where she is herself." He was discussing the question thus with another noble dame who sat next him at a large dinner-party, when they waxed so contentious that they were startled to find the whole table of two-and-twenty silent, listening to their theories on this vexed question. And a well-known beauty and statesman's wife, also present, snapped out at him: "Hanged? They ought all to have been hanged!"

"Took Arthur Balfour's sister in to dinner at the Jeunes'. Liked her frank, sensible, womanly way of talking. The reviews have made me shy of presenting copies of *Tess*, and I told her plainly that if I gave her one it might be the means of getting me into hot water with her. She said: 'Now don't I really look old enough to read any novel with safety by this time!' Some of the best women don't marry—perhaps wisely."

"*April* 10. Leslie Ward, in illustration of the calamities of artists, tells me of a lady's portrait, life-size, he has on his hands, that he was requested by her husband to paint. When he had just completed the picture she eloped with a noble earl, whereupon her husband wrote to say he did not want the painting, and Ward's labour was wasted, there being no contract. The end of the story was that the husband divorced her, and, like Edith in Browning's 'Too Late', she 'married the other', and brought him a son and heir. At a dinner the very same evening the lady who was my neighbour at the table told me that her husband was counsel in the case, which was hurried through, that the decree might be made absolute and the remarriage take place before the baby was born."

"11. In the evening with Sir F. and Lady J. to the Gaiety Theatre to hear Lottie Collins in her song 'Ta-ra-ra'. A rather striking tune and performance, to foolish words."

"15. *Good Friday*. Read review of *Tess* in *The Quarterly*. A smart and amusing article; but it is easy to be smart and amusing if a man will forgo veracity and sincerity. . . . How strange that one may write a book without knowing what one puts into it—or rather, the reader reads into it. Well, if this sort of thing continues no more novel-writing for me. A man must be a fool to deliberately stand up to be shot at."

Moreover, the repute of the book was spreading not only through England, and America, and the Colonies, but through the European Continent and Asia; and during this year translations appeared in various languages, its publication in Russia exciting great interest. On the other hand, some local libraries in English-speaking countries "suppressed" the novel—with what effect was not ascertained. Hardy's good-natured friends Henry James and R. L. Stevenson (whom he afterwards called the Polonius and the Osric of novelists) corresponded about it in this vein: "Oh, yes, dear Louis: 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' is

vile. The pretence of sexuality is only equalled by the absence of it [?], and the abomination of the language by the author's reputation for style." (*Letters of Henry James.*)

"16. Dr. Walter Lock, Warden of Keble, Oxford, called. '*Tess*', he said, 'is the Agamemnon without the remainder of the Oresteian trilogy.' This is inexact, but suggestive as to how people think.

"Am glad I have got back from London and all those dinners:—London, that *hot-plate* of humanity, on which we first sing, then simmer, then boil, then dry away to dust and ashes!

"*Easter Sunday*. Was told a story of a handsome country-girl. Her lover, though on the point of matrimony with her, would not perform it because of the temper shown by her when they went to buy the corner-cupboard and tea-things, her insistence on a different pattern, and so on. Their child was born illegitimate. Leaving the child at home she went to Jersey, for this reason, that a fellow village girl had gone there, married, and died; and the other thought that by going and introducing herself to the widower as his late wife's playmate and friend from childhood he would be interested in her and marry her too. She carried this out, and he did marry her. But her temper was so bad that he would not live with her; and she went on the streets. On her voyage home she died of disease she had contracted, and was thrown into the sea—some say before she was quite dead. Query: What became of the baby?"

He notes that on the 27th of the month his father, away in the country, "went upstairs for the last time". On the 31st he received a letter from his sister Mary on their father's illness, saying that it being of a mild lingering kind there was no immediate hurry for his return, and hence he dined with Lady Malmesbury on his birthday, June 2nd, in fulfilment of a three weeks' engagement, before returning to Dorchester. This, however, he did the

next day, arriving at his house just when his brother had come to fetch him.

He found his father much changed; and yet he rallied for some weeks onward.

In the town one day Hardy passed by chance the tent just erected for Sanger's Circus, when the procession was about to start. "Saw the Queen climb up on her lofty gilt-and-crimson throne by a step-ladder. Then the various nations personified climbed up on theirs. They, being men, mounted anyhow, 'No swearin'!' being said to them as a caution. The Queen, seated in her chair on the terrestrial globe, adjusts her crimson and white robes over her soiled satin shoes for the start, and looks around on Hayne's trees, the church-tower, and Egdon Heath in the distance. As she passes along the South-walk Road she is obliged to duck her head to avoid the chestnut boughs tearing off her crown."

"*June* 26. Considered methods for the Napoleon drama. Forces; emotions, tendencies. The characters do not act under the influence of reason."

"*July* 1. We don't always remember as we should that in getting at the truth, we get only at the true nature of the impression that an object, etc., produces on us, the true thing in itself being still, as Kant shows, beyond our knowledge.

"The art of observation (during travel, etc.) consists in this: the seeing of great things in little things, the whole in the part—even the infinitesimal part. For instance, you are abroad: you see an English flag on a ship-mast from the window of your hotel: you realize the English navy. Or, at home, in a soldier you see the British Army; in a bishop at your club, the Church of England; and in a steam hooter you hear Industry."

He was paying almost daily visits to his father at this time. On the 19th his brother told him the patient was no

worse, so he did not go that day. But on the 20th Crocker, one of his brother's men, came to say that their father had died quietly that afternoon—in the house in which he was born. Thus, in spite of his endeavours, Hardy had not been present.

Almost the last thing his father had asked for was water fresh drawn from the well—which was brought and given him; he tasted it and said, "Yes—that's our well-water. Now I know I am at home."

Hardy frequently stated in after years that the character of Horatio in *Hamlet* was his father's to a nicety, and in Hardy's copy of that play his father's name and the date of his death are written opposite the following lines:

> "Thou hast been
> As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
> A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
> Hast ta'en with equal thanks."

He was buried close to his father and mother, and near the knights of various dates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with whom the Hardys had been connected.

"*August* 14. Mother described to-day the three Hardys as they used to appear passing over the brow of the hill to Stinsford Church on a Sunday morning, three or four years before my birth. They were always hurrying, being rather late, their fiddles and violoncello in green-baize bags under their left arms. They wore top hats, stick-up shirt-collars, dark blue coats with great collars and gilt buttons, deep cuffs and black silk 'stocks' or neckerchiefs. Had curly hair, and carried their heads to one side as they walked. My grandfather wore drab cloth breeches and buckled shoes, but his sons wore trousers and Wellington boots."

In August they received at Max Gate a long-promised visit from Sir Arthur Blomfield, who had taken a house a

few miles off for a month or two. Contrary to Hardy's expectations Blomfield liked the design of the Max Gate house. The visit was a very pleasant one, abounding in reminiscences of 8 Adelphi Terrace, and included a drive to "Weatherbury" (Puddletown) Church and an examination of its architecture.

"*August* 31. My mother says she looks at the furniture and feels she is nothing to it. All those belonging to it, and the place, are gone, and it is left in her hands, a stranger. (She has, however, lived there these fifty-three years!)"

"*August*. I hear of a girl of Maiden Newton who was shod by contract like a horse, at so much a year."

"*September* 4. There is a curious Dorset expression—'tankard-legged'. This style of leg seems to have its biggest end downwards, and I have certainly seen legs of that sort. My mother says that my Irish ancestress had them, the accomplished lady who is reputed to have read the Bible through seven times; though how my mother should know what the legs of her husband's great-great-grandmother were like I cannot tell."

"Among the many stories of spell-working that I have been told, the following is one of how it was done by two girls about 1830. They killed a pigeon, stuck its heart full of pins, made a tripod of three knitting needles, and suspended the heart on them over a lamp, murmuring an incantation while it roasted, and using the name of the young man in whom one or both were interested. The said young man felt racking pains about the region of the heart, and suspecting something went to the constables. The girls were sent to prison."

This month they attended a Field-Club meeting at Swanage, and were introduced to "old Mr. B——, 'the King of Swanage'. He had a good profile, but was rougher in speech than I should have expected after his years of London—being the ordinary type of Dorset man, self-made by trade, whenever one of the county does self-make

himself, which is not often. . . . Met Dr. Yeatman, the Bishop of Southwark [afterwards of Worcester]. He says the Endicotts [Mrs. J. Chamberlain's ancestors] are a Dorset family."

"*September* 17. Stinsford House burnt. Discovered it to be on fire when driving home from Dorchester with E. I left the carriage and ran across the meads. She drove on, having promised to dine at Canon R. Smith's. I could soon see that the old mansion was doomed, though there was not a breath of wind. Coppery flames were visible in the sun through the trees of the park, and a few figures in shirt-sleeves on the roof. Furniture on the lawn: several servants perspiring and crying. Men battering out windows to get out the things—a bruising of tender memories for me. I worked in carrying books and other articles to the vicarage. When it grew dark the flames entered the drawing and dining rooms, lighting up the chambers of so much romance. The delicate tones of the wall-painting seemed pleased at the illumination at first, till the inside of the rooms became one roaring oven; and then the ceiling fell, and then the roof, sending a fountain of sparks from the old oak into the sky.

"Met Mary in the churchyard, who had been laying flowers on Father's grave, on which the firelight now flickered.

"Walked to Canon Smith's dinner-party just as I was, it being too late to change. E. had preceded me there, since I did not arrive until nine. Dinner disorganized and pushed back between one and two hours, they having been to the fire. Met Bosworth Smith [Harrow master], who had taken E. to the fire, though I saw neither of them. Late home.

"I am sorry for the house. It was where Lady Susan Strangways, afterwards Lady Susan O'Brien, lived so many years with her actor-husband, after the famous

elopement in 1764, so excellently described in Walpole's Letters, Mary Frampton's Journal, etc.

"As stated, she knew my grandfather well, and he carefully heeded her tearful instructions to build the vault for her husband and later herself, 'just large enough for us two'. Walpole's satire on her romantic choice—that 'a footman were preferable'—would have missed fire somewhat if tested by time.

"My father when a boy-chorister in the gallery of the church used to see her, an old and lonely widow, walking in the garden in a red cloak."

"*End of September.* In London. This is the time to realize London as an old city, all the pulsing excitements of May being absent.

"Drove home from dining with McIlvaine at the Café Royal, behind a horse who had no interest in me, was going a way he had no interest in going, and was whipped on by a man who had no interest in me, or the horse, or the way. Amid this string of compulsions reached home."

"*October.* At Great Fawley, Berks. Entered a ploughed vale which might be called the Valley of Brown Melancholy. The silence is remarkable. . . . Though I am alive with the living I can only see the dead here, and am scarcely conscious of the happy children at play."

"*October* 7. Tennyson died yesterday morning."

"*October* 12. At Tennyson's funeral in Westminster Abbey. The music was sweet and impressive, but as a funeral the scene was less penetrating than a plain country interment would have been. Lunched afterwards at the National Club with E. Gosse, Austin Dobson, Theodore Watts, and William Watson."

"18. Hurt my tooth at breakfast-time. I look in the glass. Am conscious of the humiliating sorriness of my earthly tabernacle, and of the sad fact that the best of parents could do no better for me. . . . Why should a man's mind have been thrown into such close, sad,

sensational, inexplicable relations with such a precarious object as his own body!"

"*October* 24. The best tragedy — highest tragedy in short—is that of the WORTHY encompassed by the INEVITABLE. The tragedies of immoral and worthless people are not of the best."

"*December*. At the 'Empire' [Music-Hall]. The dancing-girls are nearly all skeletons. One can see drawn lines and puckers in their young flesh. They should be penned and fattened for a month to round out their beauty."

"*December* 17. At an interesting legal dinner at Sir Francis Jeune's. They were all men of law but myself—mostly judges. Their stories, so old and boring to one another, were all new to me, and I was delighted. Hawkins told me his experiences in the Tichborne case, and that it was by a mere chance that he was not on the other side. Lord Coleridge (the cross-examiner in the same case, with his famous, 'Would you be surprised to hear?') was also anecdotic. Afterwards, when Lady J. had a large reception, the electric-lights all went out, just when the rooms were most crowded, but fortunately there being a shine from the fire we all stood still till candles were brought in old rummaged-up candlesticks."

CHAPTER II

VISITS AND INTERMITTENT WRITING

1893: *Aet.* 52–53

"*January* 13. *The Fiddler of the Reels* (short story) posted to Messrs. Scribner, New York."

"*February* 16. Heard a curious account of a grave that was ordered (by telegraph?) at West Stafford, and dug. But no funeral ever came, the person who had ordered it being unknown; and the grave had to be filled up." This entry had probably arisen from Hardy's occupation during some days of this winter in designing his father's tombstone, of which he made complete drawings for the stonemason; and it was possibly his contact with the stonemason that made him think of that trade for his next hero, though in designing church stonework as an architect's pupil he had of course met with many.

"*February* 22. There cannot be equity in one kind. Assuming, *e.g.*, the possession of £1,000,000 sterling or 10,000 acres of land to be the coveted ideal, all cannot possess £1,000,000 or 10,000 acres. But there is a practicable equity possible: that the happiness which one man derives from one thing shall be equalled by what another man derives from another thing. Freedom from worry, for instance, is a counterpoise to the lack of great possessions, though he who enjoys that freedom may not think so."

"*February* 23. A story must be exceptional enough to justify its telling. We tale-tellers are all Ancient Mariners, and none of us is warranted in stopping Wedding Guests

(in other words, the hurrying public) unless he has something more unusual to relate than the ordinary experience of every average man and woman.

"The whole secret of fiction and the drama—in the constructional part—lies in the adjustment of things unusual to things eternal and universal. The writer who knows exactly how exceptional, and how non-exceptional, his events should be made, possesses the key to the art."

"*April.* I note that a clever thrush, and a stupid nightingale, sing very much alike.

"Am told that Nat C——'s good-for-nothing grandson has 'turned ranter'—*i.e.* street-preacher—and, meeting a girl he used to carry on with, the following dialogue ensued:

HE: 'Do you read your Bible for your spiritual good?'

SHE: 'Ho-ho! Git along wi' thee!'

HE: 'But do you, my dear young woman?'

SHE: 'Haw-haw! Not this morning!'

HE: 'Do you read your Bible, I implore?'

SHE: (*tongue out*) 'No, nor you neither. Come, you can't act in that show, Natty! You haven't the guts to carry it off!' The discussion was ended by their going off to Came Plantation."

In London this spring they again met many people, the popularity of Hardy as an author now making him welcome anywhere. For the first time they took a whole house, 70 Hamilton Terrace, and brought up their own servants, and found themselves much more comfortable under this arrangement than they had been before.

At such crushes, luncheons, and dinners the Hardys made or renewed acquaintance also with Mrs. Richard Chamberlain, Mr. Charles Wyndham, Mr. Goschen, and the Duke, Duchess, and Princess May of Teck, afterwards Queen Mary. "Lady Winifred Gardner whispered to me that meeting the Royal Family always reminded her of family prayers. The Duke confused the lady who introduced me to him by saying it was unnecessary, as he had

known me for years, adding privately to me when she was gone, 'That's good enough for her: of course I meant I had known you spiritually'."

"13. Whibley dined with me at the Savile, and I afterwards went with him to the Trocadero Music-Hall. Saw the great men—famous performers at the Halls—drinking at the bar in long coats before going on: on their faces an expression of not wishing in the least to emphasize their importance to the world."

"*April* 19. Thought while dressing, and seeing people go by to their offices, how strange it is that we should talk so glibly of 'this cold world which shows no sympathy', when this is the feeling of so many components of the same world—probably a majority—and nearly everyone's neighbour is waiting to give and receive sympathy."

"25. Courage has been idealized; why not Fear?—which is a higher consciousness, and based on a deeper insight."

"27. A great lack of tact in A. J. B., who was in the chair at the Royal Literary Fund dinner which I attended last night. The purpose of the dinner was, of course, to raise funds for poor authors, largely from the pockets of the more successful ones who were present with the other guests. Yet he dwelt with much emphasis on the decline of the literary art, and on his opinion that there were no writers of high rank living in these days. We hid our diminished heads, and buttoned our pockets. What he said may have been true enough, but alas for saying it then!"

"28. At Academy Private View. Find that there is a very good painting here of Woolbridge Manor-House under the (erroneous) title of 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' ancestral home'. Also one entitled 'In Hardy's Country, Egdon Heath'.

"The worst of taking a furnished house is that the articles in the rooms are saturated with the thoughts and glances of others."

"*May* 10. Spent a scientific evening at the conversazione of the Royal Society, where I talked on the exhibits to Sir R. Quain, Dr. Clifford Allbutt, Humphry Ward, Bosworth Smith, Sir J. Crichton-Browne, F. and G. Macmillan, Ray Lankester, and others, without (I flatter myself) betraying excessive ignorance in respect of the points in the show."

"*May* 18. Left Euston by 9 o'clock morning train with E. for Llandudno, *en route* for Dublin. After arrival at Llandudno drove round Great Orme's Head. Magnificent deep purple-grey mountains, the fine colour being on account of an approaching storm."

"19. Went on to Holyhead and Kingstown. Met on board John Morley, the Chief Secretary, and Sir John Pender. Were awaited at Dublin by conveyance from the Viceregal Lodge as promised, this invitation being one renewed from last year, when I was obliged to postpone my visit on account of my father's death. We were received by Mrs. Arthur Henniker, the Lord-Lieutenant's sister. A charming, *intuitive* woman apparently. Lord Houghton (the Lord-Lieutenant) came in shortly after.

"Our bedroom windows face the Phœnix Park and the Wicklow Mountains. The Lodge appears to have been built some time in the last century. A roomy building with many corridors."

"20. To Dublin Castle, Christ Church, etc., conducted by Mr. Trevelyan, Em having gone with Mrs. Henniker, Mrs. Greer, and Miss Beresford to a Bazaar. Next day (Sunday) she went to Christ Church with them, and Trevelyan and I, after depositing them at the church door, went on to Bray, where we found the Chief Secretary and the Lord Chancellor at the grey hotel by the shore,'making magistrates by the dozen', as Morley said."

"22. *Whit Monday*. Several went to the races. Mr. Lucy (who is also here) and I, however, went into Dublin, and viewed the public buildings and some comi-

cal drunken women dancing, I suppose because it was Whitsuntide.

"A larger party at dinner. Mr. Dundas, an A.D.C., played banjo and sang: Mrs. Henniker the zithern."

"23. Morley came to lunch. In the afternoon I went with H. Lucy to the scene of the Phœnix Park murders."

"24. Queen's birthday review. Troops and carriages at door at ½ past 11. The Aides—of whom there are about a dozen—are transformed by superb accoutrements into warriors—Mr. St. John Meyrick into a Gordon Highlander [he was killed in the South African War], Mr. Dundas into a dashing hussar. Went in one of the carriages of the procession with E. and the rest. A romantic scene, pathetically gay, especially as to the horses in the gallop past. 'Yes: very pretty!' Mr. Dundas said, as one who knew the real thing.

"At lunch Lord Wolseley told me interesting things about war. On the other side of me was a young lieutenant, grandson of Lady de Ros, who recalled the Napoleonic wars. By Wolseley's invitation I visited him at the Military Hospital. Thence drove to Mrs. Lyttelton's to tea at the Chief Secretary's Lodge (which she rented). She showed me the rooms in which the bodies of Lord F. Cavendish and Mr. Burke were placed, and told some gruesome details of the discovery of a roll of bloody clothes under the sofa after the entry of the succeeding Secretary. The room had not been cleaned out since the murders.

"We dined this evening at the Private Secretary's Lodge with Mrs. Jekyll. Met Mahaffy there, a rattling, amusing talker, and others. Went back to the Viceregal Lodge soon enough to join the state diners in the drawing-room. Talked to several, and the Viceroy. Very funny altogether, this little Court."

"25. Went over Guinness's Brewery, with Mrs. Henniker and several of the Viceregal guests, in the morning. Mr. Guinness conducted us. On the miniature

railway we all got splashed with porter, or possibly dirty water, spoiling Em's and Mrs. Henniker's clothes. E. and I left the Lodge after lunch and proceeded by 3 o'clock train to Killarney, Lord Houghton having given me a copy of his poems. Put up at the Great Southern Railway Hotel."

"26. Drove in car round Middle Lake, first driving to Ross Castle. Walked in afternoon about Killarney town, where the cows stand about the streets like people."

"27. Started in wagonette for the Gap of Dunloe. Just below Kate Kearney's house Em mounted a pony and I proceeded more leisurely on foot by the path. The scenery of the Black Valley is deeply impressive. Here are beauties of Nature to delight man, and to degrade him by attracting all the vagabonds in the country. Boats met us at the head of the Upper Lake, and we were rowed through the three to Ross Castle, whence we drove back to Killarney town."

On the following Sunday they left and passed through Dublin, sleeping at the Marine Hotel at Kingstown, and early the next morning took the boat to Holyhead. Reached London the same evening.

Early in June Hardy attended a rehearsal at Terry's Theatre of his one-act play called *The Three Wayfarers*—a dramatization of his story *The Three Strangers*, made at the suggestion of J. M. Barrie. On the 3rd June the play was produced with one equally short by his friend, and another or two. The Hardys went with Lady Jeune and some more friends, and found that the little piece was well received.

During the week he saw Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and *Rosmersholm*, in which Miss Elizabeth Robins played. The former he had already seen, but was again impressed by it, as well as by the latter. Hardy could not at all understand the attitude of the English press towards these tragic

productions—the culminating evidence of our blinkered insular taste being afforded by the nickname of the "Ibscene drama" which they received.

On the eighth he met for the first time (it is believed) that brilliant woman Mrs. Craigie; and about this date various other people, including Mr. Hamilton Aidé, an old friend of Sir Arthur Blomfield's. In the week he still followed up Ibsen, going to *The Master Builder* with Sir Gerald and Lady Fitzgerald and her sister, Mrs. Henniker, who said afterwards that she was so excited by the play as not to be able to sleep all night; and on Friday lunched with General Milman at the Tower, inspecting "Littleease", and other rooms not generally shown at that time. In the evening he went with Mrs. Hardy and Miss Milman to Barrie's play, *Walker, London*, going behind the scenes with Barrie, and making the acquaintance of J. L. Toole, who said he could not go on even now on a first night without almost breaking down with nervousness. In a letter to Mrs. Henniker Hardy describes this experience:

"The evening of yesterday I spent in what I fear you will call a frivolous manner—indeed, during the time, my mind reverted to our Ibsen experience; and I could not help being regretfully struck by the contrast—although I honestly was amused. Barrie had arranged to take us and Maarten Maartens to see B.'s play of *Walker, London*, and lunching yesterday with the Milmans at the Tower we asked Miss Milman to be of the party. Mr. Toole heard we had come and invited us behind the scenes. We accordingly went and sat with him in his dressing-room, where he entertained us with hock and champagne, he meanwhile in his paint, wig, and blazer, as he had come off the stage, amusing us with the drollest of stories about a visit he and a friend paid to the Tower some years ago: how he amazed the custodian by entreating the loan of the crown jewels for an amateur dramatic performance for a charitable purpose, offering to deposit 30s. as a

guarantee that he would return them, etc., etc., etc. We were rather late home as you may suppose."

Some ten days later Hardy was at Oxford. It was during the Encaenia, with the Christ Church and other college balls, garden parties, and suchlike bright functions, but Hardy did not make himself known, his object being to view the proceedings entirely as a stranger. It may be mentioned that the recipients of Honorary Degrees this year included Lord Rosebery, the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Liddell, and Sir Charles Euan Smith, a friend of his own. He viewed the Commemoration proceedings from the undergraduates' gallery of the Sheldonian, his quarters while at Oxford being at the Wilberforce Temperance Hotel.

The remainder of their season in London this year was of the usual sort. A memorial service to Admiral Tryon, a view of the marriage procession of the Duke of York and Princess May from the Club window, performances by Eleanora Duse and Ada Rehan in their respective theatres, with various dinners and luncheons, brought on the end of their term in Hamilton Terrace, and they returned to Dorchester. A note he made this month runs as follows:

"I often think that women, even those who consider themselves experienced in sexual strategy, do not know how to manage an *honest* man."

In the latter part of July Hardy had to go up to town again for a few days, when he took occasion to attend a lecture by Stepniak on Tolstoi, to visit City churches, and to go with Lady Jeune and her daughters to a farewell performance by Irving. His last call this summer was on Lady Londonderry, who remained his friend through the ensuing years. "A beautiful woman still", he says of her; "and very glad to see me, which beautiful women are not always. The Duchess of Manchester [Consuelo] called while I was there, and Lady Jeune. All four of us talked

of the marriage-laws, a conversation which they started, not I; also of the difficulties of separation, of terminable marriages where there are children, and of the nervous strain of living with a man when you know he can throw you over at any moment."

It may be mentioned here that after the Duchess of Manchester's death a good many years later Hardy described her as having been when he first knew her "a warm-natured woman, laughing-eyed, and bubbling with impulses, in temperament very much like 'Julie-Jane' in one of my poems".

"*At Dorchester. July 31st.* Mrs. R. Eliot lunched. Her story of the twins, 'May' and 'June'. May was born between 11 and 12 on the 31st May, and June between 12 and 1 on June the 1st."

The following month, in reply to an inquiry by the editors of the Parisian paper *L'Ermitage*, he wrote:

"I consider a social system based on individual spontaneity to promise better for happiness than a curbed and uniform one under which all temperaments are bound to shape themselves to a single pattern of living. To this end I would have society divided into *groups of temperaments*, with a different code of observances for each group."

It is doubtful if this Utopian scheme possessed Hardy's fancy for any long time.

In the middle of August Hardy and his wife accepted an invitation to visit the Milnes-Gaskells at Wenlock Abbey, on their way thither calling at Hereford to see the Cathedral, Hardy always making a point of not missing such achievements in architecture, even if familiar. Lady Catherine and her daughter met them at the station. "Lady C. is as sweet as ever, and almost as pretty, and occasionally shows a quizzical wit. The pet name 'Catty' which her dearest friends give her has, I fear, a suspicious tremor of malice." They were interested to find their bedroom in the Norman part of the building, Hardy saying he

felt quite mouldy at sleeping within walls of such high antiquity.

Their time at the Abbey appears to have been very pleasant. They idled about in the shade of the ruins, and Milnes-Gaskell told an amusing story of a congratulatory dinner by fellow-townsmen to a burgher who had obtained a divorce from his wife, where the mayor made a speech beginning "On this auspicious occasion". During their stay they went with him to Stokesay Castle and Shrewsbury. Lady Wenlock came one day; and on Sunday Hardy and Lady C. walked till they were tired, when they "sat down on the edge of a lonely sandpit and talked of suicide, pessimism, whether life was worth living, and kindred dismal subjects, till we were quite miserable. After dinner all sat round a lantern in the court under the stars—where Lady C. told stories in the Devonshire dialect, moths flying about the lantern as in *In Memoriam*. She also defined the difference between coquetting and flirting, considering the latter a grosser form of the first, and alluded to Zola's phrase, 'a woman whose presence was like a caress', saying that some women could not help it being so, even if they wished it otherwise. I doubted it, considering it but their excuse for carrying on."

On their way back the Hardys went to Ludlow Castle, and deplored the wanton treatment which had led to the rooflessness of the historic pile where *Comus* was first performed and *Hudibras* partly written. Hardy thought that even now a millionaire might be able to re-roof it and make it his residence.

On a flying visit to London at the end of this month, dining at the Conservative Club with Sir George Douglas, he had "an interesting scientific conversation" with Sir James Crichton-Browne. "A woman's brain, according to him, is as large in proportion to her body as a man's. The most passionate women are not those selected in civilized society to breed from, as in a state of nature, but the

colder; the former going on the streets (I am sceptical about this). The doctrines of Darwin require readjusting largely; for instance, the survival of the fittest in the struggle for life. There is an altruism and coalescence between cells as well as an antagonism. Certain cells destroy certain cells; but others assist and combine. Well, I can't say."

"*September* 13. At Max Gate. A striated crimson sunset; opposite it I sit in the study writing by the light of a shaded lamp, which looks primrose against the red." This was Hardy's old study facing west (now altered) in which he wrote *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, before he removed into his subsequent one looking east, where he wrote *The Dynasts* and all his later poetry, and which is still unchanged.

"*September* 14. Drove with Em. to the Sheridans', Frampton. Tea on lawn. Mrs. Mildmay, young Harcourt, Lord Dufferin, etc. On our return all walked with us as far as the first park-gate. May [afterwards Lady Stracey] looked remarkably well."

"*September* 17. At Bockhampton heard a story about eels that was almost gruesome—how they jumped out of a bucket at night, crawled all over the house and half-way up the stairs, their tails being heard swishing in the dark, and were ultimately found in the garden; and when water was put to them to wash off the gravel and earth they became lively and leapt about."

At the end of the month Hardy and his wife went on a visit to Sir Francis and Lady Jeune at Arlington Manor, finding the house when they arrived as cheerful as the Jeunes' house always was in those days, Hardy saying that there was never another house like it for cheerfulness. Among the other house-guests were Mrs. Craigie ("John Oliver Hobbes"), Lewis Morris, Mr. Stephen (a director of the North-Western Railway), and Hubert Howard, son of Lord Carlisle. On Sunday morning Hardy took a

two hours' walk with Mrs. Craigie on the moor, when she explained to him her reasons for joining the Roman Catholic Church, a step which had vexed him somewhat. Apparently he did not consider her reasons satisfactory, but their friendship remained unbroken. While staying there they went to Shaw House, an intact Elizabethan mansion, and to a picnic in Savernake Forest, "where Lady Jeune cooked luncheon in a great saucepan, with her sleeves rolled up and an apron on".

"*October* 7-10. Wrote a song." (Which of his songs is not mentioned.)

"*November* 11. Met Lady Cynthia Graham. In appearance she is something like my idea of Tess, though I did not know her when the novel was written."

"*November* 23. Poem. 'The Glass-stainer' (published later on)."

"*November* 28. Poem. 'He views himself as an automaton' (published).

"*December*. Found and touched up a short story called 'An Imaginative Woman'.

"In London with a slight cold in the head. Dined at the Dss. of Manchester's. Most of the guests had bad colds, and our hostess herself a hacking cough. A lively dinner all the same. As some people had not been able to come I dined with her again a few days later, as did also George [afterwards Lord] Curzon. Lady Londonderry told me that her mother's grandmother was Spanish, whence the name of Theresa. There were also present the Duke of Devonshire, Arthur Balfour, and Mr. and Mrs. Lyttelton. When I saw the Duchess again two or three days later, she asked me how I liked her relation, the Duke. I said not much; he was too heavy for one thing. 'That's because he's so shy!' she urged. 'I assure you he is quite different when it wears off.' I looked as if I did not believe much in the shyness. However, I'll assume it was so."

After looking at a picture of Grindelwald and the Wet-

terhorn at somebody's house he writes: "I could argue thus: 'There is no real interest or beauty in this mountain, which appeals only to the childish taste for colour or size. The little houses at the foot are the real interest of the scene'." Hardy never did argue so, nor intend to, nor quite believe the argument; but one understands what he means.

Finishing his London engagements, which included the final revision with Mrs. Henniker of a weird story in which they had collaborated, entitled "The Spectre of the Real", he spent Christmas at Max Gate as usual, receiving the carol-singers there on Christmas Eve, where, "though quite modern, with a harmonium, they made a charming picture with their lanterns under the trees, the rays diminishing away in the winter mist". On New Year's Eve it was calm, and they stood outside the door listening to the muffled peal from the tower of Fordington St. George.

CHAPTER III

ANOTHER NOVEL FINISHED, MUTILATED, AND RESTORED

1894–1895: *Aet.* 53–55

"*February* 4, 1894. Curious scene encountered this (Sunday) evening as I was walking back to Dorchester from Bockhampton very late—nearly 12 o'clock. A girl almost in white on the top of Stinsford Hill, beating a tambourine and dancing. She looked like one of the 'angelic quire', who had tumbled down out of the sky, and I could hardly believe my eyes. Not a soul there or near but her and myself. Was told she belonged to the Salvation Army, who beat tambourines devotionally." The scene was afterwards put into verse.

One day this month he spent in Stinsford Churchyard with his brother, superintending the erection of their father's tombstone.

At Londonderry House the subject arose of social blunders. The hostess related some amusing ones of hers; but Sir Redvers Buller capped everybody by describing what he called a "double-barrelled" one of his own. He inquired of a lady next him at dinner who a certain gentleman was, "like a hippopotamus", sitting opposite them. He was the lady's husband; and Sir Redvers was so depressed by the disaster that had befallen him that he could not get it off his mind; hence at a dinner the next evening he sought the condolences of an elderly lady, to whom he related his misfortune; and remembered when he had

told the story that his listener was the gentleman's mother.

At a very interesting luncheon at the Bachelors' Club given by his friend George Curzon he made the acquaintance of Mr. F. C. Selous, the mighty hunter, with the nature of whose fame he was not, however, quite in sympathy, wondering how such a seemingly humane man could live for killing; and also of Lord Roberts and Lord Lansdowne.

After these cheerful doings he returned to Max Gate for a while, but when in London again, to look for a house for the spring and summer, he occasionally visited a friend he had earlier known by correspondence, Lord Pembroke, author of *South Sea Bubbles*, a fellow Wessex man, as he called himself, for whom Hardy acquired a very warm feeling. He was now ill at a nursing home in London, and an amusing incident occurred while his visitor was sitting by his bedside one afternoon, thinking what havoc of good material it was that such a fine and handsome man should be prostrated. He whispered to Hardy that there was a "Tess" in the establishment, who always came if he rang at that time of the day, and that he would do so then that Hardy might see her. He accordingly rang, whereupon Tess's chronicler was much disappointed at the result; but endeavoured to discern beauty in the very indifferent figure who responded, and at last persuaded himself that he could do so. When she had gone the patient apologized, saying that for the first time since he had lain there a stranger had attended to his summons.

On Hardy's next visit to his friend Pembroke said with the faintest reproach: "You go to the fashionable house in front, and you might come round to the back to see me." The nursing home was at the back of Lady Londonderry's. They never met again, and when he heard of Pembroke's unexpected death Hardy remembered the words and grieved.

"*April* 7. Wrote to Harper's asking to be allowed to cancel the agreement to supply a serial story to *Harper's Magazine*." This agreement was the cause of a good deal of difficulty afterwards (the story being *Jude the Obscure*), as will be seen.

This year they found a house at South Kensington, and moved into it with servants brought from the country, to be surprised a little later by the great attention their house received from butchers' and bakers' young men, postmen, and other passers-by; when they found their innocent country servants to have set up flirtations with all these in a bold style which the London servant was far too cautious to adopt.

At the end of April he paid a visit to George Meredith at his house near Box Hill, and had an interesting and friendly evening there, his son and daughter-in-law being present. "Meredith", he said, "is a shade artificial in manner at first, but not unpleasantly so, and he soon forgets to maintain it, so that it goes off quite."

At a dinner at the Grand Hotel given by Mr. Astor to his contributors in May, Hardy had a talk with Lord Roberts, who spoke most modestly of his achievements. It was "an artistic and luxuriant banquet, with beds of roses on the tables, electric lights shining up like glow-worms through their leaves and petals [an arrangement somewhat of a novelty then], and a band playing behind the palms".

This month he spared two or three days from London to go to Aldeburgh in Suffolk, where at the house of Mr. Edward Clodd, his host, he met Grant Allen and Whymper, the mountaineer, who told of the tragedy on the Matterhorn in 1865 in which he was the only survivor of the four Englishmen present—a reminiscence which specially impressed Hardy from the fact that he remembered the particular day, thirty years before, of the arrival of the news in this country. He had walked from his lodgings in

Westbourne Park Villas to Harrow that afternoon, and on entering the place was surprised to notice people standing at the doors discussing something with a serious look. It turned out to be the catastrophe, two of the victims being residents of Harrow. The event lost nothing by Whymper's relation of it. He afterwards marked for Hardy on a sketch of the Matterhorn a red line showing the track of the adventurers to the top and the spot of the accident—a sketch which is still at Max Gate with his signature.

On a day in the week following he was at the Women Writers' Club—probably its first anniversary meeting—and, knowing what women writers mostly had to put up with, was surprised to find himself in a group of fashionably dressed youngish ladies, the Princess Christian being present with other women of rank. "Dear me—are women-writers like this!" he said with changed views.

During the same week they fulfilled likewise day or night invitations to Lady Carnarvon's, Mrs. Pitt-Rivers's, and other houses. At Lady Malmesbury's one of her green linnets escaped from its cage, and he caught it—reluctantly, but feeling that a green linnet at large in London would be in a worse predicament than as a prisoner. At the Countess of ——'s "a woman very rich and very pretty" [Marcia, Lady Yarborough] informed him mournfully in *tête-à-tête* that people snubbed her, which so surprised him that he could hardly believe it, and frankly told her it was her own imagination. She was the lady of the "Pretty pink frock" poem, though it should be stated that the deceased was not her husband but an uncle. And at an evening party at her house later he found her in a state of nerves, lest a sudden downpour of rain which had occurred should prevent people coming, and spoil her grand gathering. However, when the worst of the thunderstorm was over they duly streamed in, and she touched him joyfully on the shoulder and said, "You've conjured them!" "My entertainer's sister, Lady P——, was

the most beautiful woman there. On coming away there were no cabs to be got [on account of a strike, it seems], and I returned to S.K. on the top of a 'bus. No sooner was I up there than the rain began again. A girl who had scrambled up after me asked for the shelter of my umbrella and I gave it—when she startled me by holding on tight to my arm and bestowing on me many kisses for the trivial kindness. She told me she had been to 'The Pav', and was tired, and was going home. She had not been drinking. I descended at the South Kensington Station and watched the 'bus bearing her away. An affectionate nature wasted on the streets! It was a strange contrast to the scene I had just left."

Early in June they were at the first performance of a play by Mrs. Craigie at Daly's Theatre, and did some entertaining at their own house, after which Mrs. Hardy was unwell, and went to Hastings for a change of air, Hardy going to Dorchester to look at some alterations he was making in his Max Gate house. At the end of a week he fetched his wife from Hastings, and after more dinners and luncheons he went to a melodrama at the Adelphi, which was said to be based without acknowledgement on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. He had received many requests for a dramatic version of the novel, but he found that nothing could be done with it among London actor-managers, all of them in their notorious timidity being afraid of the censure from conventional critics that had resisted Ibsen; and he abandoned all idea of producing it, one prominent actor telling him frankly that he could not play such a dubious character as Angel Clare (which would have suited him precisely) "because I have my name to make, and it would risk my reputation with the public if I played anything but a heroic character without spot". Hardy thought of the limited artistic sense of even a leading English actor. Yet before and after this time Hardy received letters or oral messages from almost every

actress of note in Europe asking for an opportunity of appearing in the part of "Tess"—among them being Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Ellen Terry, Sarah Bernhardt, and Eleanora Duse.

During July Hardy met Mrs. Asquith for the first time; and at another house he had an interesting conversation with Dr. W. H. Russell on the battles in the Franco-Prussian war, where Russell had been correspondent for *The Times*, and was blamed by some readers for putting too much realism into his accounts. Russell told Hardy a distressing story of a horse with no under jaw, laying its head upon his thigh in a dumb appeal for sympathy, two or three days after the battle of Gravelotte, when he was riding over the field; and other such sickening experiences.

Whether because he was assumed to have written a notorious novel or not Hardy could not say, but he found himself continually invited hither and thither to see famous beauties of the time—some of whom disappointed him; but some he owned to be very beautiful, such as Lady Powis, Lady Yarborough, Lady de Grey—"handsome, tall, glance-giving, arch, friendly"—the Duchess of Montrose, Mrs. John Hanbury, Lady Cynthia Graham, Amélie Rives, and many others. A crush at Lady Spencer's at the Admiralty was one of the last of the parties they attended this season. But he mostly was compelled to slip away as soon as he could from these gatherings, finding that they exhausted him both of strength and ideas, few of the latter being given him in return for his own, because the fashionable throng either would not part from those it possessed, or did not possess any.

On the day of their giving up their house at South Kensington a curious mishap befell him. He had dispatched the servants and luggage in the morning; Mrs. Hardy also had driven off to the station, leaving him, as they had arranged, to look over the house, see all was right, and await the caretaker, when he and his port-

manteau would follow the rest to Dorchester. He was coming down the stairs of the silent house dragging the portmanteau behind him when his back gave way, and there he had to sit till the woman arrived to help him. In the course of the afternoon he was better and managed to get off, the acute pain turning out to be rheumatism aggravated by lifting the portmanteau.

"*August* 1-7. Dorchester: Seedy: back got better by degrees."

"*October* 16. To London to meet Henry Harper on business."

"*October* 20. Dined at the Guards' Mess, St James's, with Major Henniker. After dinner went round with him to the sentries with a lantern."

"*October* 23. Dining at the Savile last Sunday with Ray Lankester we talked of hypnotism, will, etc. He did not believe in silent influence, such as making a person turn round by force of will without communication. But of willing, for example, certain types of women by speech to do as you desire—such as 'You *shall*, or you *are to*, marry me', he seemed to have not much doubt. If true, it seems to open up unpleasant possibilities."

"*November*. Painful story. Old P——, who narrowly escaped hanging for arson about 1830, returned after his imprisonment, died at West Stafford, his native village, and was buried there. His widow long after died in Fordington, having saved £5 to be buried with her husband. The rector of the village made no objection, and the grave was dug. Meanwhile the daughter had come home, and said the money was not enough to pay for carrying the body of her mother out there in the country; so the grave was filled in, and the woman buried where she died."

"*November* 11. Old song heard:

'And then she arose,
And put on her best clothes,
And went off to the north with the Blues.'

"Another:

'Come ashore, Jolly Tar, with your trousers on.'

"Another (sung at J. D.'s wedding):

'Somebody here has been . . .
Or else some charming shepherdess
That wears the gown of green.'"

In December he ran up to London alone on publishing business, and stayed at a temporary room off Piccadilly, to be near his club. It was then that there seems to have occurred, according to what he said later, some incident of the kind possibly adumbrated in the verses called "At Mayfair Lodgings", in *Moments of Vision*. He watched during a sleepless night a lighted window close by, wondering who might be lying there ill. Afterwards he discovered that a woman had lain there dying, and that she was one whom he had cared for in his youth, when she was a girl in a neighbouring village.

In March of the next year (1895) Hardy was going about the neighbourhood of Dorchester and other places in Wessex with Mr. Macbeth Raeburn, the well-known etcher, who had been commissioned by the publishers to make sketches on the spot for frontispieces to the Wessex Novels. To those scenes which Hardy could not visit himself he sent the artist alone, one of which places, Charborough Park, the scene of *Two on a Tower*, was extremely difficult of access, the owner jealously guarding ingress upon her estate, and particularly to her park and house. Raeburn came back in the evening full of his adventures. Reaching the outer park-gate he found it locked, but the lodge-keeper opened it on his saying he had important business at the house. He then reached the second park-gate, which was unfastened to him on the same representation of urgency, but more dubiously. He then got to the front door of the mansion, rang, and asked permission to

sketch the house. "Good God!" said the butler, "you don't know what you are asking. You had better be off before the mis'ess sees you, or the bailiff comes across you!" He started away discomfited, but thought he would make an attempt at a sketch behind the shadow of a tree. Whilst doing this he heard a voice shouting, and beheld a man running up to him—the redoubtable bailiff—who promptly ordered him out of the park. Raeburn as he moved off thought he detected something familiar in the accent of the bailiff, and turning, said, "Surely you come from my country?" "An' faith, man, it may be so!" the bailiff suddenly replied, whereon they compared notes, and found they had grown up in the same Scottish village. Then matters changed. "Draw where you like and what you like, only don't let her see you from the windows at a'. She's a queer auld body, not bad at bottom, though it's rather far down. Draw as ye will, an' if I see her coming I'll haud up my hand." Mr. Raeburn finished his sketch in peace and comfort, and it stands to this day at the beginning of the novel as evidence of the same.

During the spring they paid a visit of a few days to the Jeunes at Arlington Manor, where they also found Sir H. Drummond Wolff, home from Madrid, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Sir Henry Thompson, and other friends; and in May entered a flat at Ashley Gardens, Westminster, for the season. While here a portrait of Hardy was painted by Miss Winifred Thomson. A somewhat new feature in their doings this summer was going to teas on the terrace of the House of Commons—in those days a newly fashionable form of entertainment. Hardy was not a bit of a politician, but he attended several of these, and of course met many Members there.

On June 29 Hardy attended the laying of the foundation stone of the Westminster Cathedral, possibly because the site was close to the flat he occupied, for he had no leanings to Roman Catholicism. However, there he was, and deeply

impressed by the scene. In July he visited St. Saviour's, Southwark, by arrangement with Sir Arthur Blomfield, to see how he was getting on with the restoration. Dinners and theatres carried them through the month, in which he also paid a visit to Burford Bridge, to dine at the hotel with the Omar Khayyám Club and meet George Meredith, where the latter made a speech, and Hardy likewise, said to be the first and last ever made by either of them; at any rate it was the first, and last but one or two, by Hardy.

Hardy's entries of his doings were always of a fitful and irregular kind, and now there occurs a hiatus which cannot be filled. But it is clear that at the end of the summer at Max Gate he was "restoring the MS. of *Jude the Obscure* to its original state"—on which process he sets down an undated remark, probably about the end of August, when he sent off the restored copy to the publishers:

"On account of the labour of altering *Jude the Obscure* to suit the magazine, and then having to alter it back, I have lost energy for revising and improving the original as I meant to do."

In September they paid a week's visit to General and Mrs. Pitt-Rivers at Rushmore, and much enjoyed the time. It was on the occasion of the annual sports at the Larmer Tree, and a full moon and clear sky favouring, the dancing on the green was a great success. The local paper gives more than a readable description of the festivity for this particular year:

"After nightfall the scene was one of extraordinary picturesqueness and poetry, its great features being the illumination of the grounds by thousands of Vauxhall lamps, and the dancing of hundreds of couples under these lights and the mellow radiance of the full moon. For the dancing a space was especially enclosed, the figures chosen being mostly the polka-mazurka and schottische, though some country dances were started by the house-party, and

led off by the beautiful Mrs. Grove, the daughter of General Pitt-Rivers, and her charming sister-in-law, Mrs. Pitt. Probably at no other spot in England could such a spectacle have been witnessed at any time. One could hardly believe that one was not in a suburb of Paris, instead of a corner in old-fashioned Wiltshire, nearly ten miles from a railway-station in any direction."

It may be worth mentioning that, passionately fond of dancing as Hardy had been from earliest childhood, this was the last occasion on which he ever trod a measure, according to his own recollection; at any rate on the greensward, which is by no means so springy to the foot as it looks, and left him stiff in the knees for some succeeding days. It was he who started the country dances, his partner being the above-mentioned Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Grove.

A garden-party of their own at Max Gate finished the summer doings of the Hardys this year; and a very different atmosphere from that of dancing on the green soon succeeded for him, of the coming of which, by a strange divination, he must have had a suspicion, else why should he have made the following note beforehand?

" 'Never retract. Never explain. Get it done and let them howl.' Words said to Jowett by a very practical friend."

On the 1st November *Jude the Obscure* was published.

A week after, on the 8th, he sets down:

"England seventy years ago.—I have heard of a girl, now a very old woman, who in her youth was seen following a goose about the common all the afternoon to get a quill from the bird, with which the parish-clerk could write for her a letter to her lover. Such a first-hand method of getting a quill-pen for important letters was not infrequent at that date." It may be added that Hardy himself had written such love-letters, and read the answers to them: but this was after the use of the quill had been

largely abandoned for that of the steel pen, though old people still stuck to quills, and Hardy himself had to practise his earliest lessons in writing with a quill.

The onslaught upon *Jude* started by the vituperative section of the press—unequalled in violence since the publication of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* thirty years before—was taken up by the anonymous writers of libellous letters and post-cards, and other such gentry. It spread to America and Australia, whence among other appreciations he received a letter containing a packet of ashes, which the virtuous writer stated to be those of his iniquitous novel.

Thus, though Hardy with his quick sense of humour could not help seeing a ludicrous side to it all, and was well enough aware that the evil complained of was what these "nice minds with nasty ideas" had read into his book, and not what he had put there, he underwent the strange experience of beholding a sinister lay figure of himself constructed by them, which had no sort of resemblance to him as he was, and which he, and those who knew him well, would not have recognized as being meant for himself if it had not been called by his name. Macaulay's remark in his essay on Byron was well illustrated by Thomas Hardy's experience at this time: "We know of no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality."

In contrast to all this it is worth while to quote what Swinburne wrote to Hardy after reading *Jude the Obscure*:

"The tragedy—if I may venture an opinion—is equally beautiful and terrible in its pathos. The beauty, the terror, and the truth, are all yours and yours alone. But (if I may say so) how cruel you are! Only the great and awful father of 'Pierrette' and 'L'Enfant Maudit' was ever so merciless to his children. I think it would hardly be seemly to enlarge on all that I admire in your work—or on half of it—

The man who can do such work can hardly care about criticism or praise, but I will risk saying how thankful we should be (I know that I may speak for other admirers as cordial as myself) for another admission into an English paradise 'under the greenwood tree'. But if you prefer to be—or to remain—ποιητῶν τραγικώτατος[1] no doubt you may; for Balzac is dead, and there has been no such tragedy in fiction—on anything like the same lines—since he died.

"Yours most sincerely,

"A. C. SWINBURNE."

Three letters upon this same subject, written by Hardy himself to a close friend, may appropriately be given here.

LETTER I.

"MAX GATE,
"DORCHESTER,
"*November 10th*, 1895.

". . . Your review (of *Jude the Obscure*) is the most discriminating that has yet appeared. It required an artist to see that the plot is almost geometrically constructed—I ought not to say *constructed*, for, beyond a certain point, the characters necessitated it, and I simply let it come. As for the story itself, it is really sent out to those into whose souls the iron has entered, and has entered deeply at some time of their lives. But one cannot choose one's readers.

"It is curious that some of the papers should look upon the novel as a manifesto on "the marriage question" (although, of course, it involves it), seeing that it is concerned first with the labours of a poor student to get a University degree, and secondly with the tragic issues of two bad marriages, owing in the main to a doom or curse of hereditary temperament peculiar to the family of the parties. The only remarks which can be said to bear on the *general* marriage question occur in dialogue, and comprise no more

[1] The most tragic of authors.

than half a dozen pages in a book of five hundred. And of these remarks I state (p. 362) that my own views are not expressed therein. I suppose the attitude of these critics is to be accounted for by the accident that, during the serial publication of my story, a sheaf of 'purpose' novels on the matter appeared.

"You have hardly an idea how poor and feeble the book seems to me, as executed, beside the idea of it that I had formed in prospect.

"I have received some interesting letters about it already—yours not the least so. Swinburne writes, too enthusiastically for me to quote with modesty.

"Believe me, with sincere thanks for your review,

"Ever yours,

"THOMAS HARDY.

"*P.S.* One thing I did not answer. The 'grimy' features of the story go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead. The throwing of the pizzle, at the supreme moment of his young dream, is to sharply initiate this contrast. But I must have lamentably failed, as I feel I have, if this requires explanation and is not self-evident. The idea was meant to run all through the novel. It is, in fact, to be discovered in *everybody's* life, though it lies less on the surface perhaps than it does in my poor puppet's. "T. H."

LETTER II.

"MAX GATE,

"DORCHESTER,

"*November 20th*, 1895.

"I am keen about the new magazine. How interesting that you should be writing this review for it! I wish the book were more worthy of such notice and place.

"You are quite right; there is nothing perverted or

depraved in Sue's nature. The abnormalism consists in disproportion, not in inversion, her sexual instinct being healthy as far as it goes, but unusually weak and fastidious. Her sensibilities remain painfully alert notwithstanding, as they do in nature with such women. One point illustrating this I could not dwell upon: that, though she has children, her intimacies with Jude have never been more than occasional, even when they were living together (I mention that they occupy separate rooms, except towards the end), and one of her reasons for fearing the marriage ceremony is that she fears it would be breaking faith with Jude to withhold herself at pleasure, or altogether, after it; though while uncontracted she feels at liberty to yield herself as seldom as she chooses. This has tended to keep his passion as hot at the end as at the beginning, and helps to break his heart. He has never really possessed her as freely as he desired.

"Sue is a type of woman which has always had an attraction for me, but the difficulty of drawing the type has kept me from attempting it till now.

"Of course the book is all contrasts—or was meant to be in its original conception. Alas, what a miserable accomplishment it is, when I compare it with what I meant to make it!—*e.g.* Sue and her heathen gods set against Jude's reading the Greek testament; Christminster academical, Christminster in the slums; Jude the saint, Jude the sinner; Sue the Pagan, Sue the saint; marriage, no marriage; &c., &c.

"As to the 'coarse' scenes with Arabella, the battle in the schoolroom, etc., the newspaper critics might, I thought, have sneered at them for their Fieldingism rather than for their Zolaism. But your everyday critic knows nothing of Fielding. I am read in Zola very little, but have felt akin locally to Fielding, so many of his scenes having been laid down this way, and his home near.

"Did I tell you I feared I should seem too High-

Churchy at the end of the book where Sue recants? You can imagine my surprise at some of the reviews.

"What a self-occupied letter!

"Ever sincerely,

"T. H."

LETTER III.

"MAX GATE,
"DORCHESTER,
"*January* 4, 1896.

"For the last three days I have been tantalized by a difficulty in getting *Cosmopolis*, and had only just read your review when I received your note. My sincere thanks for the generous view you take of the book, which to me is a mass of imperfections. We have both been amused—or rather delighted—by the sub-humour (is there such a word?) of your writing. I think it a rare quality in living essayists, and that you ought to make more of it—I mean write more in that vein than you do.

"But this is apart from the review itself, of which I will talk to you when we meet. The rectangular lines of the story were not premeditated, but came by chance: except, of course, that the involutions of four lives must necessarily be a sort of quadrille. The only point in the novel on which I feel sure is that it makes for morality; and that delicacy or indelicacy in a writer is according to his object. If I say to a lady 'I met a naked woman', it is indelicate. But if I go on to say 'I found she was mad with sorrow', it ceases to be indelicate. And in writing Jude my mind was fixed on the ending.

"Sincerely yours,

"T. H."

In London in December they went to see Forbes-Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Romeo and Juliet, supping with them afterwards at Willis's Rooms,

a building Hardy had known many years earlier, when it was still a ballroom unaltered in appearance from that of its famous days as "Almack's"—indeed, he had himself danced on the old floor shortly after his first arrival in London in 1862, as has been mentioned.

When they got back to Dorchester during December Hardy had plenty of time to read the reviews of *Jude* that continued to pour out. Some paragraphists knowingly assured the public that the book was an honest autobiography, and Hardy did not take the trouble to deny it till more than twenty years later, when he wrote to an inquirer with whom the superstition still lingered that no book he had ever written contained less of his own life, which of course had been known to his friends from the beginning. Some of the incidents were real in so far as that he had heard of them, or come in contact with them when they were occurring to people he knew; but no more. It is interesting to mention that on his way to school he did once meet with a youth like Jude who drove the bread-cart of a widow, a baker, like Mrs. Fawley, and carried on his studies at the same time, to the serious risk of other drivers in the lanes; which youth asked him to lend him his Latin grammar. But Hardy lost sight of this featful student, and never knew if he profited by his plan.

Hardy makes a remark on one or two of the reviews:

"Tragedy may be created by an opposing environment either of things inherent in the universe, or of human institutions. If the former be the means exhibited and deplored, the writer is regarded as impious; if the latter, as subversive and dangerous; when all the while he may never have questioned the necessity or urged the non-necessity of either. . . ."

During this year 1895, and before and after, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* went through Europe in translations, German, French, Russian, Dutch, Italian, and other tongues, Hardy as a rule stipulating that the translation should be

complete and unabridged, on a guarantee of which he would make no charge. Some of the renderings, however, were much hacked about in spite of him. The Russian translation appears to have been read and approved by Tolstoi during its twelve-month's career in a Moscow monthly periodical.

In December he replied to Mr. W. T. Stead, editor of *The Review of Reviews:*

"I am unable to answer your inquiry as to 'Hymns that have helped me'.

"But the undermentioned have always been familiar and favourite hymns of mine as poetry:

"1. 'Thou turnest man, O Lord, to dust'. Ps. xc. *vv.* 3, 4, 5, 6. (Tate and Brady.)

"2. 'Awake, my soul, and with the sun.' (Morning Hymn, Ken.).

"3. 'Lead, kindly Light.' (Newman.)"

So ended the year 1895.

CHAPTER IV

MORE ON "JUDE", AND ISSUE OF "THE WELL-BELOVED"

1896–1897: *Aet.* 55–57

HARDY found that the newspaper comments on *Jude the Obscure* were producing phenomena among his country friends which were extensive and peculiar, they having a pathetic reverence for press opinions. However, on returning to London in the spring he discovered somewhat to his surprise that people there seemed not to be at all concerned at his having been excommunicated by the press, or by at least a noisy section of it, and received him just the same as ever; so that he and his wife passed this season much as usual, going to Lady Malmesbury's wedding and also a little later to the wedding of Sir George Lewis's son at the Jewish Synagogue; renewing acquaintance with the beautiful Duchess of Montrose and Lady Londonderry, also attending a most amusing masked ball at his friends Mr. and Mrs. Montagu Crackanthorpe's, where he and Henry James were the only two not in dominos, and were recklessly flirted with by the women in consequence.

This year they took again the house in South Kensington they had occupied two years earlier, and gave some little parties there. But it being a cold damp spring Hardy caught a chill by some means, and was laid up with a rheumatic attack for several days, in May suffering from a relapse. He was advised to go to the seaside for a change of air, and leaving the London house in the charge of

the servants went with Mrs. Hardy to lodgings at Brighton.

While there he received a request from the members of the Glasgow University Liberal Club to stand as their candidate in the election of a Lord Rector for the University: the objection to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who had been nominated, being that he was not a man of letters. Hardy's reply to the Honorary Secretary was written from Brighton on May 16, 1896.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your letter has just reached me here, where I am staying for a few days for change of air after an illness.

"In reply let me assure you that I am deeply sensible of the honour of having been asked by the members of the Glasgow University Liberal Club to stand as their candidate for the Lord Rectorship.

"In other circumstances I might have rejoiced at the opportunity. But personal reasons which it would be tedious to detail prevent my entertaining the idea of coming forward for the office, and I can only therefore request you to convey to the Club my regrets that such should be the case; and my sincere thanks for their generous opinion of my worthiness.

"I am, dear Sir,
"Yours faithfully,
"THOMAS HARDY."

There they stayed about a week and, finding little improvement effected, returned to South Kensington. By degrees he recovered, and they resumed going out as usual, and doing as much themselves to entertain people as they could accomplish in a house not their own. This mostly took a form then in vogue, one very convenient for literary persons, of having afternoon parties, to the invitations to which their friends of every rank as readily responded as

they had done in former years, notwithstanding the fact that at the very height of the season the Bishop of Wakefield announced in a letter to the papers that he had thrown Hardy's novel into the fire. Knowing the difficulty of burning a thick book even in a good fire, and the infrequency of fires of any sort in summer, Hardy was mildly sceptical of the literal truth of the bishop's story; but remembering that Shelley, Milton, and many others of the illustrious, reaching all the way back to the days of Protagoras, had undergone the same sort of indignity at the hands of bigotry and intolerance he thought it a pity in the interests of his own reputation to disturb the episcopal narrative of adventures with *Jude*. However, it appeared that, further,—to quote the testimony in the Bishop's *Life*—the scandalised prelate was not ashamed to deal a blow below the belt, but "took an envelope out of his paper-stand and addressed it to W. F. D. Smith, Esq., M.P. The result was the quiet withdrawal of the book from the library, and an assurance that any other books by the same author would be carefully examined before they were allowed to be circulated." Of this precious conspiracy Hardy knew nothing, or it might have moved a mind which the burning could not stir to say a word on literary garrotting. In his ignorance of it he remained silent, being fully aware of one thing, that the ethical teaching of the novel, even if somewhat crudely put, was as high as that of any of the bishop's sermons—(indeed, Hardy was afterwards reproached for its being "too much of a sermon"). And thus feeling quite calm on the ultimate verdict of Time he merely reflected on the shallowness of the episcopal view of the case and of morals generally, which brought to his memory a witty remark he had once read in a *Times* leading article, to the effect that the qualities which enabled a man to become a bishop were often the very reverse of those which made a good bishop when he became one.

The only sad feature in the matter to Hardy was that if the bishop could have known him as he was, he would have found a man whose personal conduct, views of morality, and of the vital facts of religion, hardly differed from his own.[1]

Possibly soured by all this he wrote a little while after his birthday:

"Every man's birthday is a first of April for him; and he who lives to be fifty and won't own it is a rogue or a fool, hypocrite or simpleton."

At a party at Sir Charles Tennant's, to which Hardy and his wife were invited to meet the Eighty Club, Lord Rosebery took occasion in a conversation to inquire "why Hardy had called Oxford 'Christminster'." Hardy assured him that he had not done anything of the sort, "Christminster" being a city of learning that was certainly suggested by Oxford, but in its entirety existed nowhere else in the world but between the covers of the novel under discussion. The answer was not so flippant as it seemed, for Hardy's idea had been, as he often explained, to use the difficulty of a poor man's acquiring learning at that date merely as the "tragic mischief" (among others) of a dramatic story, for which purpose an old-fashioned university at the very door of the poor man was the most striking method; and though the architecture and scenery of Oxford were the best in England adapted for this, he did

[1] That the opinions thus expressed by Bishop How in 1895 are not now shared by all the clergy may be gathered from the following extract from an article in *Theology*, August 1928:

"If I were asked to advise a priest preparing to become a *village* rector I would suggest first that he should make a good retreat . . . and then that he should make a careful study of Thomas Hardy's novels. . . . From Thomas Hardy he would learn the essential dignity of country people and what deep and often passionate interest belongs to every individual life. You cannot treat them in the mass: each single soul is to be the object of your special and peculiar prayer."

The author of this article is an eminent clergyman of the Church of England.

not slavishly copy them; indeed in some details he departed considerably from whatever of the city he took as a general model. It is hardly necessary to add that he had no feeling in the matter, and used Jude's difficulties of study as he would have used war, fire, or shipwreck for bringing about a catastrophe.

It has been remarked above that Hardy with his quick sense of humour could not help seeing a ludicrous side to his troubles over *Jude*, and an instance to that effect now occurred. The *New York World* had been among those papers that fell foul of the book in the strongest terms, the critic being a maiden lady who expressed herself thus:

"What has happened to Thomas Hardy? . . . I am shocked, appalled by this story! . . . . It is almost the worst book I ever read. . . . I thought that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was bad enough, but that is milk for babes compared to this. . . . It is the handling of it that is the horror of it. . . . I do not believe that there is a newspaper in England or America that would print this story of Thomas Hardy's as it stands in the book. Aside from its immorality there is coarseness which is beyond belief. . . . When I finished the story I opened the windows and let in the fresh air, and I turned to my bookshelves and I said: 'Thank God for Kipling and Stevenson, Barrie and Mrs. Humphry Ward. Here are four great writers who have never trailed their talents in the dirt'."

It was therefore with some amazement that in the summer, after reading the above and other exclamations grossly maligning the book and the character of its author, to show that she would not touch him with a pair of tongs, he received a letter from the writer herself. She was in London, and requested him to let her interview him "to get your side of the argument". He answered:

"SAVILE CLUB,
"*July* 16, 1896.

"MY DEAR MADAM:

"I have to inform you in answer to your letter that ever since the publication of *Jude the Obscure* I have declined to be interviewed on the subject of that book; and you must make allowance for human nature when I tell you that I do not feel disposed to depart from this rule in favour of the author of the review of the novel in the *New York World*.

"I am aware that the outcry against it in America was only an echo of its misrepresentation here by one or two scurrilous papers which got the start of the more sober press, and that dumb public opinion was never with these writers. But the fact remains that such a meeting would be painful to me and, I think, a disappointment to you.

"Moreover, my respect for my own writings and reputation is so very slight that I care little about what happens to either, so that the rectification of judgements, etc., and the way in which my books are interpreted, do not much interest me. Those readers who, like yourself, could not see that *Jude* (though a book quite without a 'purpose' as it is called) makes for morality more than any other book I have written, are not likely to be made to do so by a newspaper article, even from your attractive pen.

"At the same time I cannot but be touched by your kindly wish to set right any misapprehension you may have caused about the story. Such a wish will always be cherished in my recollection, and it removes from my vision of you some obviously unjust characteristics I had given it in my mind. This is, at any rate on my part, a pleasant gain from your letter, whilst I am 'never the worse for a touch or two on my speckled hide' as the consequence of your review.

"Believe me, dear Madam,

"Yours sincerely,

"THOMAS HARDY.

"To Miss JEANNETTE GILDER."

It may be interesting to give Miss Gilder's reply to this:

"Hotel Cecil,
"*July* 17, '96.

"Dear Mr. Hardy,

"I knew that you were a great man, but I did not appreciate your goodness until I received your letter this morning.

"Sincerely yours,
"Jeannette L. Gilder."

Hardy must indeed have shown some magnanimity in condescending to answer the writer of a review containing such contumelious misrepresentations as hers had contained. But, as he said, she was a woman, after all—one of the sex that makes up for lack of justice by excess of generosity—and she had screamed so grotesquely loud in her article that Hardy's sense of the comicality of it had saved his feelings from being much hurt by the outrageous slurs.

Here, he thought, the matter had ended. But make the doors upon a woman's wit, and it will out at the casement. The amusing sequel to the episode was that the unsuspecting Hardy was invited to an evening party a few days later by an American lady resident in London, and though he knew her but slightly he went, having nothing better to do. While he was talking to his hostess on the sofa a strange lady drew up her chair rather near them, and listened to the conversation, but did not join in it. It was not till afterwards that he discovered that this silent person had been his reviewer, who was an acquaintance of his entertainer, and that the whole thing had been carefully schemed.

Various social events took them into and through July; Hardy's chief pleasure, however, being none of these, but a pretty regular attendance with his wife in this, as in other summers, at the Imperial Institute, not far from

their house, where they would sit and listen to the famous bands of Europe that were engaged year after year by the management, but were not, to Hardy's regret, sufficiently appreciated by the London public. Here one evening they met, with other of their friends, the beautiful Mrs., afterwards Lady, Grove; and the "Blue Danube" Waltz being started, Hardy and the latter lady danced two or three turns to it among the promenaders, who eyed them with a mild surmise as to whether they had been drinking or not. In such wise the London season drew to a close and was wound up, as far as they were concerned, with the wedding of one of Lady Jeune's daughters, Miss Dorothy Stanley, at St. George's, Hanover Square, to Mr. Henry Allhusen.

When he reached Dorchester he paid a visit to his mother, on whom he remarks that she was well, but that "her face looked smaller".

On the 12th August they left Dorchester for Malvern, where they put up at the Foley Arms, climbed the Beacon, Hardy on foot, Mrs. Hardy on a mule; drove round the hills, visited the Priory Church, and thence went on to Worcester to see the Cathedral and porcelain works; after which they proceeded to Warwick and Kenilworth, stopping to correct proofs at the former place, and to go over the castle and church. A strange reminder of the transitoriness of life was given to Hardy in the church, where, looking through a slit by chance he saw the coffin of the then recent Lord Warwick, who, a most kindly man, some while before, on meeting him in London, had invited him to Warwick Castle, an invitation which he had been unable to accept at the time, though he had promised to do so later. "Here I am at last", he said to the coffin as he looked; "and here are you to receive me!" It made an impression on Hardy which he never forgot.

They took lodgings for a week at Stratford-on-Avon, and visited the usual spots associated with Shakespeare's

name; going on to Coventry and to Reading, a town which had come into the life of Hardy's paternal grandmother, who had lived here awhile; after which they went to Dover, where Hardy read *King Lear*, which was begun at Stratford. He makes the following observation on the play:

"*September* 6. Finished reading *King Lear*. The grand scale of the tragedy, scenically, strikes one, and also the large scheme of the plot. The play rises from and after the beginning of the third act, and Lear's dignity with it. Shakespeare did not quite reach his intention in the King's character, and the splitting of the tragic interest between him and Gloucester does not, to my mind, enhance its intensity, although commentators assert that it does."

"*September* 8. Why true conclusions are not reached, notwithstanding everlasting palaver: Men endeavour to hold to a mathematical consistency in things, instead of recognizing that certain things may both be good and mutually antagonistic: *e.g.*, patriotism and universal humanity; unbelief and happiness.

"There are certain questions which are made unimportant by their very magnitude. For example, the question whether we are moving in Space this way or that; the existence of a God, etc."

Having remained at Dover about a fortnight they crossed to Ostend in the middle of September, and went on to Bruges. He always thought the railway station of this town the only satisfactory one in architectural design that he knew. It was the custom at this date to admire the brick buildings of Flanders, and Hardy himself had written a prize essay as a young man on Brick and Terra-Cotta architecture; but he held then, as always, that nothing can really compensate in architecture for the lack of stone, and would say on this point—with perhaps some intentional exaggeration—that the ashlar back-yards of Bath had more dignity than any brick front in Europe. From

Bruges they went on to Brussels, Namur, and Dinant, through scenes to become synonymous with desolation in the war of after years.

"*September* 23. At dinner at the public table [of the hotel] met a man possessed of the veritable gambling fever. He has been playing many days at the Casino (roulette and trente-et-quarante). He believes thoroughly in his 'system', and yet, inconsistently, believes in luck: *e.g.*, 36 came into his head as he was walking down the street towards the Casino to-day; and it made him back it, and he won. He plays all the afternoon and all the evening.

"His system appears to be that of watching for numbers which have not turned up for a long time; but I am not sure.

"He is a little man; military looking; large iron-grey moustache standing out detached; iron-grey hair; fresh crimson skin. Produces the book, ruled in vertical columns, in which he records results. Discusses his system incessantly with the big grey-bearded man near. Can talk of nothing else. . . . Has lost to-day 4500 francs. Has won back some—is going to play to-night till he has won it all back, and if he can profit enough to pay the expenses of his trip on the Continent he will be satisfied. His friend with the beard, who seems to live in the hotel permanently, commends him by a nod and a word now and then, but not emphatically."

"*September* 24. After breakfast unexpectedly saw the gambler standing outside the hotel-entrance without a hat, looking wild, and by comparison with the previous night like a tree that has suddenly lost its leaves. He came up to me; said he had had no luck on the previous night; had plunged, and lost heavily. He had not enough money left to take him home third-class. Is going to Monte Carlo in November with £2000 to retrieve his losses. . . .

"We left between 12 and 1. The gambler left at the same time by a train going in the opposite direction, and

was carefully put into a third-class carriage by his friend of the hotel, who bought his ticket. He wore a green-grey suit and felt hat, looking bleak-faced and absent, and seemed passive in the other's hands. His friend is apparently a decoy from the Casino."

Mrs. Hardy, not being a good walker, had brought her bicycle as many people did just then, bicycling being wildly popular at the time, and Flanders being level. After they had paid twenty-four francs duty at Ostend for importing it, it had several adventures in its transit from place to place, was always getting lost, and miraculously turned up again when they were just enjoying the relief of finding themselves free of it. At Liège it really did seem gone, Hardy having watched the transfer of all the luggage at a previous junction, and the bicycle not being among it. Having given up thinking of it they were hailed by an official, who took them with a mysterious manner to a storeroom some way off, unlocked it, and with a leer said, to Hardy's dismay: "*Le véloze!*" How it had got there they did not know.

At Spa they drove to the various fountains, examined the old gaming-house in the Rue Vauxhall where those that were now cold skeletons had burnt hot with the excitement of play, thought of the town's associations in fact and fiction, of the crowned heads of all the countries of Europe who had found their pleasure and cure at this Mother of Watering-places—now shrunk small like any other ancient matron.

Getting back to Brussels they put up for association's sake at the same hotel they had patronized twenty years before, but found it had altered for the worse since those bright days. Hardy again went out to Waterloo, which had been his chief reason for stopping at the Belgian capital, and no doubt made some more observations with a view to *The Dynasts*, to which he at this time had given

the provisional name of "Europe in Throes". All he writes thereon in his pocket-book while in Brussels is:

"Europe in Throes.
"Three Parts. Five Acts each.
"*Characters:* Burke, Pitt, Napoleon, George III., Wellington . . . and many others."

But he set down more copious notes for the drama elsewhere. It is believed he gave time to further conjectures as to the scene of the Duchess's Ball, which he had considered when here before, and on which it may be remembered there is a note in *The Dynasts*, ending, "The event happened less than a century ago, but the spot is almost as phantasmal in its elusive mystery as towered Camelot, the Palace of Priam, or the Hill of Calvary".

Concerning the scene of the battle itself he writes:

"*October* 2. To Field of Waterloo. Walked alone from the English line along the Charleroi Road to 'La Belle Alliance'. Struck with the *nearness* of the French and English lines to each other. Shepherds with their flocks and dogs, men ploughing, two cats, and myself, the only living creatures on the field."

Returning homeward through Ostend a little later they found the hotels and shops closed and boarded up, and the Digue empty, Mrs. Hardy being the single woman bicyclist where there had been so many.

"Max Gate. *October* 17. A novel, good, microscopic touch in Crabbe [which would strike one trained in architecture]. He gives surface without outline, describing his church by telling *the colour of the lichens.*

"Poetry. Perhaps I can express more fully in verse ideas and emotions which run counter to the inert crystallized opinion—hard as a rock—which the vast body of men have vested interests in supporting. To cry out in a passion-

ate poem that (for instance) the Supreme Mover or Movers, the Prime Force or Forces, must be either limited in power, unknowing, or cruel—which is obvious enough, and has been for centuries—will cause them merely a shake of the head; but to put it in argumentative prose will make them sneer, or foam, and set all the literary contortionists jumping upon me, a harmless agnostic, as if I were a clamorous atheist, which in their crass illiteracy they seem to think is the same thing. . . . If Galileo had said in verse that the world moved, the Inquisition might have let him alone."

"1897. *January* 27. To-day has length, breadth, thickness, colour, smell, voice. As soon as it becomes *yesterday* it is a thin layer among many layers, without substance, colour, or articulate sound."

"*January* 30. Somebody says that the final dictum of the *Ion* of Plato is 'inspiration, not art'. The passage is θεῖον καὶ μὴ τεχνικόν. And what is really meant by it is, I think, more nearly expressed by the words 'inspiration, not technicality'—'art' being too comprehensive in English to use here."

"*February* 4. Title: 'Wessex Poems: with Sketches of their Scenes by the Author'."

"*February* 10. In spite of myself I cannot help noticing countenances and tempers in objects of scenery, *e.g.* trees, hills, houses."

"*February* 21. My mother's grandfather, Swetman—a descendant of the Christopher Swetman of 1631 mentioned in the History of the County as a small landed proprietor in the parish—used to have an old black bedstead, with the twelve apostles on it in carved figures, each about one foot six inches high. Some of them got loose, and the children played with them as dolls. What became of that bedstead?"

"*March* 1. Make a lyric of the speech of Hyllus at the

close of the *Trachiniae*." (It does not appear that this was ever carried out.)

At the beginning of March a dramatization of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was produced in America with much success by Mr. Fiske. About the same date Hardy went with Sir Francis Jeune to a banquet at the Mansion House in honour of Mr. Bayard, the American Ambassador, on his leaving England, which Hardy described as a "brilliant gathering", though the night was so drenching and tempestuous as to blow off house-roofs and flood cellars. In the middle of the month a revised form of a novel of his which had been published serially in 1892 as *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved: A Sketch of a Temperament*, was issued in volume form as *The Well-Beloved*. The theory on which this fantastic tale of a subjective idea was constructed is explained in the preface to the novel, and again exemplified in a poem bearing the same name, written about this time and published with *Poems of the Past and the Present* in 1901—the theory of the transmigration of the ideal beloved one, who only exists in the lover, from material woman to material woman—as exemplified also by Proust many years later. Certain critics affected to find unmentionable moral atrocities in its pages, but Hardy did not answer any of the charges further than by defining in a letter to a literary periodical the scheme of the story somewhat more fully than he had done in the preface:

"Not only was it published serially five years ago but it was sketched many years before that date, when I was comparatively a young man, and interested in the Platonic Idea, which, considering its charm and its poetry, one could well wish to be interested in always. . . . There is, of course, underlying the fantasy followed by the visionary artist the truth that all men are pursuing a shadow, the Unattainable, and I venture to hope that this may redeem the tragi-comedy from the charge of frivolity. . . . 'Avice' is an old name common in the county, and 'Caro' (like all

the other surnames) is an imitation of a local name . . . this particular modification having been adopted because of its resemblance to the Italian for 'dear'."

In reply to an inquiry from an editor he wrote:

"No: I do not intend to answer the article on *The Well-Beloved*. Personal abuse best answers itself. What struck me, next to its mendacious malice, was its maladroitness, as if the writer were blinded by malignity. . . . Upon those who have read the book the review must have produced the amazed risibility I remember feeling at Wilding's assertions when as a youth I saw Foote's comedy of *The Liar*. . . . There is more fleshliness in *The Loves of the Triangles* than in this story—at least to me. To be sure, there is one explanation which should not be overlooked: a reviewer *himself* afflicted with 'sex mania' might review so—a thing terrible to think of."

Such were the odd effects of Hardy's introduction of the subjective theory of love into modern fiction, and so ended his prose contributions to literature (beyond two or three short sketches to fulfil engagements), his experiences of the few preceding years having killed all his interest in this form of imaginative work, which had ever been secondary to his interest in verse.

A letter from him to Swinburne was written about this time, in which he says:

"I must thank you for your kind note about my fantastic little tale [*The Well-Beloved*], which, if it can make, in its better parts, any faint claim to imaginative feeling, will owe something of such feeling to you, for I often thought of lines of yours during the writing; and indeed, was not able to resist the quotation of your words now and then.

"And this reminds me that one day, when examining several English imitations of a well-known fragment of Sappho, I interested myself in trying to strike out a better equivalent for it than the commonplace 'Thou, too, shalt die', etc., which all the translators had used during the last

hundred years. I then stumbled upon your 'Thee, too, the years shall cover', and all my spirit for poetic pains died out of me. Those few words present, I think, the finest *drama* of Death and Oblivion, so to speak, in our tongue.

. . . . . .

"Believe me to be

"Yours very sincerely,

"THOMAS HARDY.

"*P.S.*—I should have added that *The Well-Beloved* is a fanciful exhibition of the artistic nature, and has, I think, some little foundation in fact. I have been much surprised, and even grieved, by a ferocious review attributing an immoral quality to the tale. The writer's meaning is beyond me. T. H."

PART II

VERSE, TO THE END OF "THE DYNASTS"

CHAPTER V

COLLECTING OLD POEMS AND MAKING NEW

1897–1898: *Aet.* 57–58

THE misrepresentations of the last two or three years affected but little, if at all, the informed appreciation of Hardy's writings, being heeded almost entirely by those who had not read him; and turned out ultimately to be the best thing that could have happened; for they wellnigh compelled him, in his own judgement at any rate, if he wished to retain any shadow of self-respect, to abandon at once a form of literary art he had long intended to abandon at some indefinite time, and resume openly that form of it which had always been more instinctive with him, and which he had just been able to keep alive from his early years, half in secrecy, under the pressure of magazine writing. He abandoned it with all the less reluctance in that the novel was, in his own words, "gradually losing artistic form, with a beginning, middle, and end, and becoming a spasmodic inventory of items, which has nothing to do with art".

The change, after all, was not so great as it seemed. It was not as if he had been a writer of novels proper, and as more specifically understood, that is, stories of modern artificial life and manners showing a certain smartness of treatment. He had mostly aimed at keeping his narratives close to natural life and as near to poetry in their subject as the conditions would allow, and had often regretted that those conditions would not let him keep them nearer still.

Nevertheless he had not known, whilst a writer of prose, whether he might not be driven to society novels, and hence, as has been seen, he had kept, at casual times, a record of his experiences in social life, though doing it had always been a drudgery to him. It was now with a sense of great comfort that he felt he might leave off further chronicles of that sort. But his thoughts on literature and life were often written down still, and from his notes much of which follows has been abridged.

He had already for some time been getting together the poems which made up the first volume of verse that he was about to publish. In date they ranged from 1865 intermittently onwards, the middle period of his novel-writing producing very few or none, but of late years they had been added to with great rapidity, though at first with some consternation he had found an awkwardness in getting back to an easy expression in numbers after abandoning it for so many years; but that soon wore off.

He and his wife went to London as usual this year (1897), but did not take a house there. After two or three weeks' stay they adopted the plan of living some way out, and going up and down every few days, the place they made their temporary centre being Basingstoke. In this way they saw London friends, went to concerts at the Imperial Institute (the orchestra this season being the famous Vienna band under Edouard Strauss), saw one or two Ibsen plays, and the year's pictures. Being near they also went over the mournful relics of that city of the past, Silchester; till in the middle of June they started for Switzerland, thus entirely escaping the racket of the coming Diamond Jubilee, and the discomfort it would bring upon people like them who had no residence of their own in London.

All the world, including the people of fashion habitually abroad, was in London or arriving there, and the charm of a lonely Continent impressed the twain much.

The almost empty Channel steamer, the ease with which they crossed France from Havre by Paris, Dijon, and Pontarlier to Neuchâtel, the excellent rooms accorded them by obsequious hosts at the hotels in Switzerland, usually frequented by English and American tourists, made them glad they had come. On the actual day, the 20th, they were at Berne, where they celebrated it by attending a Jubilee Concert in the Cathedral, with the few others of their fellow-countryfolk who remained in the town. At Interlaken the comparative solitude was just as refreshing, the rosy glow from the Jungfrau, visible at three in the morning from Hardy's bedroom, seeming an exhibition got up for themselves alone; and a pathetic procession of empty omnibuses went daily to and from each railway train between shops that looked like a banquet spread for people who delayed to come. They drove up the valley to Grindelwald, and having been conveyed to Scheidegg, walked thence to the Wengern Alp—overlooking the scene of *Manfred*—where a baby had just been born, and where Hardy was more impressed by the thundering rumble of unseen avalanches on the immense Jungfrau immediately facing than by the sight of the visible ones.

The next day, or the next following, *The Times*' account of the celebration in London of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee reached Hardy's hands, and he took it out and read it in the snowy presence of the maiden-monarch that dominated the whole place.

It was either in the train as it approached Interlaken, or while he was there looking at the peak, that there passed through his mind the sentiments afterwards expressed in the lines called "The Schreckhorn: with thoughts of Leslie Stephen".

After a look at Lauterbrunnen, the Staubbach, the Lake and Castle of Thun, they stopped at the Hôtel Gibbon, Lausanne, Hardy not having that aversion from

the historian of the *Decline and Fall* which Ruskin recommended. He found that, though not much might remain of the original condition of the building or the site, the remoter and sloping part of the garden, with its acacias and irregular contours, could not have been much changed from what it was when Gibbon haunted it, and finished his history. Accordingly his recaller sat out there till midnight on June 27, and imagined the historian closing his last page on the spot, as described in his *Autobiography*:

"It was on the day, or rather the night, of the 27th of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer house in my garden. After laying down my pen I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains."

It is uncertain whether Hardy chose that particular evening for sitting out in the garden because he knew that June 27th was Gibbon's date of conclusion, or whether the coincidence of dates was accidental. The later author's imaginings took the form of the lines subjoined, which were printed in *Poems of the Past and the Present*.

LAUSANNE

In Gibbon's old garden: 11-12 *p.m.*

June 27, 1897

A spirit seems to pass,
Formal in pose, but grave withal and grand:
He contemplates a volume in his hand,
And far lamps fleck him through the thin acacias.

Anon the book is closed,
With "It is finished!" And at the alley's end
He turns, and when on me his glances bend
As from the Past comes speech—small, muted, yet composed.

"How fares the Truth now?—Ill?
—Do pens but slily further her advance?
May one not speed her but in phrase askance?
Do scribes aver the Comic to be Reverend still?

"Still rule those minds on earth
At whom sage Milton's wormwood words were hurled:
'*Truth like a bastard comes into the world*
Never without ill-fame to him who gives her birth'?"[1]

From Lausanne, making excursions to Ouchy, and by steamer to Territet, Chillon, Vevey, and other places on the lake, they afterwards left for Zermatt, going along the valley of the Rhone amid intense heat till they gradually rose out of it beside the roaring torrent of the Visp. That night Hardy looked out of their bedroom window in the Hôtel Mt. Cervin, and "Could see where the Matterhorn was by the absence of stars within its outline", it being too dark to see the surface of the mountain itself although it stood facing him. He meant to make a poem of the strange feeling implanted by this black silhouette of the mountain on the pattern of the constellation; but never did, so far as is known. However, the mountain inspired him to begin one sonnet, finished some time after—that entitled "To the Matterhorn"—the terrible accident on whose summit, thirty-two years before this date, had so impressed him at the time of its occurrence.

While walking from Zermatt with a Russian gentleman to the Riffel-Alp Hotel, whither Mrs. Hardy had preceded him on a pony, he met some English ladies, who informed him of the mysterious disappearance of an Englishman somewhere along the very path he had been

[1] The quotation is from *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, the passage running as follows: "Truth is as impossible to be soiled by any outward touch, as the sunbeam; though this ill hap wait on her nativity, that she never comes into the world, but like a bastard, to the ignominy of him that brought her forth; till Time, the midwife rather than the mother of truth, have washed and salted the infant and declared her legitimate."

following. Having lunched at the hotel and set his wife upon the pony again he sent her on with the guide, and slowly searched all the way down the track for some clue to the missing man, afterwards writing a brief letter to *The Times* to say there was no sign visible of foul play anywhere on the road. The exertion of the search, after walking up the mountain-path in the hot morning sun, so exhausted his strength that on arriving at Geneva, whither they went after leaving Zermatt, he was taken so ill at the Hôtel de la Paix that he had to stay in bed. Here as he lay he listened to the plashing of a fountain night and day just outside his bedroom window, the casements of which were kept widely open on account of the heat. It was the fountain beside which the Austrian Empress was murdered shortly after by an Italian anarchist. His accidental nearness in time and place to the spot of her doom moved him much when he heard of it, since thereby hung a tale. She was a woman whose beauty, as shown in her portraits, had attracted him greatly in his youthful years, and had inspired some of his early verses, the same romantic passion having also produced the outline of a novel upon her, which he never developed.

While he was recovering at Geneva Mrs. Hardy found by chance the tomb of an ancestor who had died there. But of Geneva, its lake, Diodati, Montalègre, Ferney, and the neighbourhood, he merely remarks: "These haunts of the illustrious! Ah, but *they* are gone now, and care for their chosen nooks no more!"

Again in London in July he expressed views on scenery in the following letter:

To the Editor of the "Saturday Review".

"Sir,—I am unable to reply to your inquiry on 'The Best Scenery I know'. A week or two ago I was looking at the inexorable faces of the Jungfrau and the Matterhorn:

a few days later at the Lake of Geneva with all its soft associations. But, which is 'best' of things that do not compare at all, and hence cannot be reduced to a common denominator? At any given moment we like best what meets the mood of that moment.

"Not to be entirely negative, however, I may say that, in my own neighbourhood, the following scenes rarely or never fail to delight beholders:

"1. View from Castle Hill, Shaftesbury.
"2. View from Pilsdon Pen.
"3. New Forest vistas near Brockenhurst.
"4. The River Dart.
"5. The coast from Trebarwith Strand to Beeny Cliff, Cornwall."

From London he returned to Max Gate, and with Mrs. Hardy wandered off to Wells Cathedral, and onwards to Frome and Longleat, whence after examining the library and the architecture he proceeded to Salisbury, a place in which he was never tired of sojourning, partly from personal associations and partly because its graceful cathedral pile was the most marked instance in England of an architectural intention carried out to the full.

"*August* 10, *Salisbury*. Went into the Close late at night. The moon was visible through both the north and south clerestory windows to me standing on the turf on the north side. . . . Walked to the west front, and watched the moonlight creep round upon the statuary of the façade—stroking tentatively and then more and more firmly the prophets, the martyrs, the bishops, the kings, and the queens. . . . Upon the whole the Close of Salisbury, under the full summer moon on a windless midnight, is as beautiful a scene as any I know in England—or for the matter of that elsewhere.

"Colonel T. W. Higginson of the United States, who is staying at the same hotel as ourselves, introduced himself to us. An amiable, well-read man, whom I was glad to

meet. He fought in the Civil War. Went with him to hunt up the spot of the execution of the Duke of Buckingham, whose spirit is said to haunt King's House still."

After revisiting Stonehenge he remarks:

"The misfortune of ruins—to be beheld nearly always at noonday by visitors, and not at twilight.

"*August* 10, *continued.* 'The day goeth away . . . the shadows of the evening are stretched out . . . I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. Therefore hear, ye nations. . . . To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.' Passages from the first lesson (Jer. vi.) at the Cathedral this afternoon. E. and I present. A beautiful chapter, beautifully read by the old Canon."

"*August* 13. All tragedy is grotesque—if you allow yourself to see it as such. A risky indulgence for any who have an aspiration towards a little goodness or greatness of heart! Yet there are those who do."

"*August* 15. It is so easy nowadays to call any force above or under the sky by the name of 'God'—and so pass as orthodox cheaply, and fill the pocket!"

In September he passed a few pleasant days in bicycling about the neighbourhood with Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who had an idea just at that time that he would like to buy a house near Weymouth. They found a suitable house for sale at Rodwell, commanding a full view of Portland Roads; but difficulties arose when inquiries were made, and Mr. Kipling abandoned the idea.

Bicycling was now in full spirit with the Hardys—and, indeed, with everybody—and many were the places they visited by that means.

"*October* 10. Am told a singularly creepy story—absolutely true, I am assured—of a village girl near here who was about to be married. A watch had been given her by a

former lover, his own watch, just before their marriage was prevented by his unexpected death of consumption. She heard it *going* in her box at waking on the morning of the wedding with the second lover, though it had not been touched for years.

"Lizzy D—— [the monthly nurse who had attended at Hardy's birth] told my mother that she walked eighteen (?) miles the day after her own baby was born. . . . She was an excellent nurse, much in demand; of infinite kind-heartedness, humour, and quaintness, and as she lived in a cottage quite near our house at Bockhampton, she as it were kept an eye upon the Hardy family always, and being her neighbour gave my mother the preference in clashing cases. She used to tell a story of a woman who came to her to consult her about the ghost of another woman she declared she had seen, and who 'troubled her'—the deceased wife of the man who was courting her.

" 'How long hev' the woman been dead?' I said.

" 'Many years!'

" 'Oh, that were no ghost. Now if she'd only been dead a month or two, and you were making her husband your fancy-man, there might have been something in your story. But Lord, much can she care about him after years and years in better company!' "

To return to 1897. Nothing more of much account occurred to Hardy during its lapse, though it may be mentioned that *Jude*, of which only a mutilated version could be printed as a serial in England and America, appeared in a literal translation in Germany, running through several months of a well-known periodical in Berlin and Stuttgart without a single abridgement.

"1898. *February* 5. Write a prayer, or hymn, to One not Omnipotent, but hampered; striving for our good, but unable to achieve it except occasionally." [This idea of a limited God of goodness, often dwelt on by Hardy, was expounded ably and at length in MacTaggart's *Some*

Dogmas of Religion several years later, and led to a friendship which ended only with the latter's death.]

As the spring drew on they entered upon their yearly residence of a few months in London—this time taking a flat in Wynnstay Gardens, Kensington. Hardy did some reading at the British Museum with a view to *The Dynasts*, and incidentally stumbled upon some details that suggested to him the Waterloo episode embodied in a poem called "The Peasant's Confession". He also followed up the concerts at the Imperial Institute, mostly neglected by Londoners. One visit gave him occasion for the following note, the orchestra this year being from the Scala, Milan:

"Scene at the Imperial Institute this afternoon. Rain floating down in wayward drops. Not a soul except myself having tea in the gardens. The west sky begins to brighten. The red, blue, and white fairy lamps are like rubies, sapphires, turquoises, and pearls in the wet. The leaves of the trees, not yet of full size, are dripping, and the waiting-maids stand in a group with nothing to do. Band playing a 'Contemplazione' by Luzzi."

On June 24th, declining to write an Introduction to a proposed Library Edition of Fielding's novels, he remarks:

"Fielding as a local novelist has never been clearly regarded, to my mind: and his aristocratic, even feudal, attitude towards the peasantry (*e.g.* his view of Molly as a 'slut' to be ridiculed, not as a simple girl, as worthy a creation of Nature as the lovely Sophia) should be exhibited strongly. But the writer could not well be a working novelist without his bringing upon himself a charge of invidiousness."

Back in Dorset in July he resumed cycling more vigorously than ever, and during the summer went to Bristol, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Sherborne, Poole, Weymouth, and many other places—sometimes with Mrs. Hardy, sometimes with his brother.

In the middle of December *Wessex Poems* was published; and verse being a new mode of expression with him in print he sent copies to friends, among them one to Leslie Stephen, who said:

"It gave me a real pleasure. I am glad to think that you remember me as a friend. . . . I am always pleased to remember that *Far from the Madding Crowd* came out under my command. I then admired the poetry which was diffused through the prose; and can recognize the same note in the versified form. . . . I will not try to criticize or distinguish, but will simply say that they have pleased me and reminded me vividly of the old time. I have, as you probably know, gone through much since then. . . ."

CHAPTER VI

"WESSEX POEMS" AND OTHERS

1899–1900: *Aet.* 58–60

In the early weeks of this year the poems were reviewed in the customary periodicals—mostly in a friendly tone, even in a tone of respect, and with praise for many pieces in the volume; though by some critics not without umbrage at Hardy's having taken the liberty to adopt another vehicle of expression than prose-fiction without consulting them. It was probably these reviews that suggested to Hardy several reflections on poetry and criticism about this time, and the following gleanings of his opinions are from the rough entries he made thereon. Some no doubt were jotted down hastily, and might have been afterwards revised.

He observes that he had been under no delusion about the coldness and even opposition he would have to encounter—at any rate from some voices—in openly issuing verse after printing nothing (with trifling exceptions) but prose for so many years.

Almost all the fault-finding was, in fact, based on the one great antecedent conclusion that an author who has published prose first, and that largely, must necessarily express himself badly in verse, no reservation being added to except cases in which he may have published prose for temporary or compulsory reasons, or prose of a poetical kind, or have written verse first of all, or for a long time intermediately.

THOMAS HARDY'S STUDY ABOUT 1900

In criticism generally, the fact that the date of publication is but an accident in the life of a literary creation, that the printing of a book is the least individual occurrence in the history of its contents, is often overlooked. In its visible history the publication is what counts, and that alone. It is then that the contents start into being for the outside public. In the present case, although it was shown that many of the verses had been written before their author dreamt of novels, the critics' view was little affected that he had "at the eleventh hour", as they untruly put it, taken up a hitherto uncared-for art.

It may be observed that in the art-history of the century there was an example staring them in the face of a similar modulation from one style into another by a great artist. Verdi was the instance, "that amazing old man" as he was called. Someone of insight wrote concerning him: "From the ashes of his early popularity, from *Il Trovatore* and its kind, there arose on a sudden a sort of phœnix Verdi. Had he died at Mozart's death-age he would now be practically unknown." And another: "With long life enough Verdi might have done almost anything; but the trouble with him was that he had only just arrived at maturity at the age of threescore and ten or thereabouts, so that to complete his life he ought to have lived a hundred and fifty years."

But probably few literary critics discern the solidarity of all the arts. Curiously enough Hardy himself dwelt upon it in a poem that seems to have been little understood, though the subject is of such interest. It is called "Rome: The Vatican: Sala delle Muse"; in which a sort of composite Muse addresses him:

> "Be not perturbed", said she. "Though apart in fame,
> I and my sisters are one."

In short, this was a particular instance of the general and rather appalling conclusion to which he came—had

indeed known before—that a volume of poetry, by clever manipulation, can be made to support any *a priori* theory about its quality. Presuppose its outstanding feature to be the defects aforesaid; instances can be found. Presuppose, as here was done, that it is overloaded with derivations from the Latin or Greek when really below the average in such words; they can be found. Presuppose that Wordsworth is unorthodox: instances can be found; that Byron is devout; instances can also be found. [The foregoing paragraphs are abridged from memoranda which Hardy set down, apparently for publication; though he never published them.]

He wrote somewhere: "There is no new poetry; but the new poet—if he carry the flame on further (and if not he is no new poet)—comes with a new note. And that new note it is that troubles the critical waters.

"Poetry is emotion put into measure. The emotion must come by nature, but the measure can be acquired by art."

In the reception of this and later volumes of Hardy's poems there was, he said, as regards form, the inevitable ascription to ignorance of what was really choice after full knowledge. That the author loved the art of concealing art was undiscerned. For instance, as to rhythm. Years earlier he had decided that too regular a beat was bad art. He had fortified himself in his opinion by thinking of the analogy of architecture, between which art and that of poetry he had discovered, to use his own words, that there existed a close and curious parallel, both arts, unlike some others, having to carry a rational content inside their artistic form. He knew that in architecture cunning irregularity is of enormous worth, and it is obvious that he carried on into his verse, perhaps in part unconsciously, the Gothic art-principle in which he had been trained—the principle of spontaneity, found in mouldings, tracery, and such like—resulting in the "unforeseen" (as it has been called) char-

acter of his metres and stanzas, that of stress rather than of syllable, poetic texture rather than poetic veneer; the latter kind of thing, under the name of "constructed ornament", being what he, in common with every Gothic student, had been taught to avoid as the plague. He shaped his poetry accordingly, introducing metrical pauses, and reversed beats; and found for his trouble that some particular line of a poem exemplifying this principle was greeted with a would-be jocular remark that such a line "did not make for immortality". The same critic might have gone to one of our cathedrals (to follow up the analogy of architecture), and on discovering that the carved leafage of some capital or spandrel in the best period of Gothic art strayed freakishly out of its bounds over the moulding, where by rule it had no business to be, or that the enrichments of a string-course were not accurately spaced; or that there was a sudden blank in a wall where a window was to be expected from formal measurement, have declared with equally merry conviction, "This does not make for immortality".

One case of the kind, in which the poem "On Sturminster Foot-Bridge" was quoted with the remark that one could make as good music as that out of a milk-cart, betrayed the reviewer's ignorance of any perception that the metre was intended to be onomatopoeic, plainly as it was shown; and another in the same tone disclosed that the reviewer had tried to scan the author's sapphics as heroics.

If any proof were wanted that Hardy was not at this time and later the apprentice at verse that he was supposed to be, it could be found in an examination of his studies over many years. Among his papers were quantities of notes on rhythm and metre: with outlines and experiments in innumerable original measures, some of which he adopted from time to time. These verse skeletons were mostly blank, and only designated by the usual marks for

long and short syllables, accentuations, etc., but they were occasionally made up of "nonsense verses"—such as, he said, were written when he was a boy by students of Latin prosody with the aid of a "Gradus".

Lastly, Hardy had a born sense of humour, even a too keen sense occasionally: but his poetry was sometimes placed by editors in the hands of reviewers deficient in that quality. Even if they were accustomed to Dickensian humour they were not to Swiftian. Hence it unfortunately happened that verses of a satirical, dry, caustic, or farcical cast were regarded by them with the deepest seriousness. In one case the tragic nature of his verse was instanced by the ballad called "The Bride-night Fire", or "The Fire at Tranter Sweatley's", the criticism being by an accomplished old friend of his own, Frederic Harrison, who deplored the painful nature of the bridegroom's end in leaving only a bone behind him. This piece of work Hardy had written and published when quite a young man, and had hesitated to reprint because of its too pronounced obviousness as a jest.

But he had looked the before-mentioned obstacles in the face, and their consideration did not move him much. He had written his poems entirely because he liked doing them, without any ulterior thought; because he wanted to say the things they contained and would contain. He offered his publishers to take on his own shoulders the risk of producing the volume, so that if nobody bought it they should not be out of pocket. They were kind enough to refuse this offer, and took the risk on themselves; and fortunately they did not suffer.

A more serious meditation of Hardy's at this time than that on critics was the following:

"*January* (1899). No man's poetry can be truly judged till its last line is written. What is the last line? The death of the poet. And hence there is this quaint consolation to any writer of verse—that it may be imperishable for all

that anybody can tell him to the contrary; and that if worthless he can never know it, unless he be a greater adept at self-criticism than poets usually are."

Writing to Hardy in March about her late husband's tastes in literature Mrs. Coventry Patmore observes:

" . . . It shows how constant he was to his *loves*. From 1875 [when he first met with the book—*vide ante*] to 1896 he continually had *A Pair of Blue Eyes* read aloud to him. Each time he felt the same shock of surprise and pleasure at its consummate art and pathos. In illness, when he asked for *A Pair of Blue Eyes* one knew he was able to *enjoy* again."

A correspondence on another matter than literature may be alluded to here. Mr. W. T. Stead had asked Hardy to express his opinion on "A Crusade of Peace" in a periodical he was about to publish under the name of *War against War*. In the course of his reply Hardy wrote:

"As a preliminary, all civilized nations might at least show their humanity by covenanting that no horses should be employed in battle except for transport. Soldiers, at worst, know what they are doing, but these animals are denied even the poor possibilities of glory and reward as a compensation for their sufferings."

His reply brought upon Hardy, naturally, scoffs at his unpractical tender-heartedness, and on the other hand, strong expressions of agreement.

In the following April (1899) the Hardys were again in London, where as in the previous year they took a flat in Wynnstay Gardens, though not the same one. They saw their friends as usual, on one of whom Hardy makes this observation after a call from him:

"When a person has gone, though his or her presence was not much desired, we regret the withdrawal of the grain of value in him, and overlook the mass of chaff that

spoilt it. We realize that the essence of his personality was a human heart, though the form was uninviting."

"It would be an amusing fact, if it were not one that leads to such bitter strife, that the conception of a First Cause which the theist calls 'God', and the conception of the same that the so-styled atheist calls 'no-God', are nowadays almost exactly identical. So that only a minor literary question of terminology prevents their shaking hands in agreement, and dwelling together in unity ever after."

At the beginning of June Hardy was staying at a country-house not many miles from London, and among the guests was the young Duchess of M——, a lady of great beauty, who asked him if he would conduct her to the grave of the poet Gray, which was within a walk. Hardy did so and, standing half-balanced on one foot by the grave (as is well known, it was also that of Gray's mother), his friend recited in a soft voice the "Elegy" from the first word to the last in leisurely and lengthy clearness without an error (which Hardy himself could not have done without some hitch in the order of the verses). With startling suddenness, while duly commending her performance, he seemed to have lived through the experience before. Then he realized what it was that had happened: in love of recitation, attitude, and poise, tone of voice, and readiness of memory, the fair lady had been the duplicate of the handsome dairymaid who had insisted on his listening to her rehearsal of the long and tedious gospels, when he taught in the Sunday school as a youth of fifteen. What a thin veneer is that of rank and education over the natural woman, he would remark.

On the 18th he met A. E. Housman (the Shropshire Lad) for the first time probably, and on the 20th he visited Swinburne at Putney, of which visit he too briefly speaks; observing, "Again much inclined to his engaging, fresh,

frank, almost childlike manner. Showed me his interesting editions, and talked of the play he was writing. Promised to go again." He also went a day or two later, possibly owing to his conversation with Swinburne (though he had been there before), to St. Mildred's, Bread Street, with Sir George Douglas, where Shelley and Mary Godwin were married, and saw the register, with the signatures of Godwin and his wife as witnesses. The church was almost unaltered since the poet and Mary had knelt there, and the vestry absolutely so, not having even received a coat of paint as it seemed. Being probably in the calling mood he visited George Meredith just afterwards, and found him "looking ruddy and well in the upper part; quite cheerful, enthusiastic and warm. Would gladly see him oftener, and must try to do so." At the end of the month he rambled in Westminster Abbey at midnight by the light of a lantern, having with some friends been admitted by Miss Bradley through the Deanery.

Hardy had suffered from rather bad influenza this summer in town, and it left an affection of the eye behind it which he had never known before; and though he hoped it might leave him on his return to Dorchester it followed him there. He was, indeed, seldom absolutely free from it afterwards.

In July he replied to a communication from the Rationalist Press Association, of which his friend Leslie Stephen was an honorary associate:

"Though I am interested in the Society I feel it to be one which would naturally compose itself rather of writers on philosophy, science, and history, than of writers of imaginative works, whose effect depends largely on detachment. By belonging to a philosophic association imaginative writers place themselves in this difficulty, that they are misread as propagandist when they mean to be simply artistic and delineative."

The pleasures of bicycling were now at their highest

appreciation, and many miles did Hardy and his wife, and other companions, cover during the latter part of this summer. He was not a long-distance cyclist, as was natural at fifty-nine, never exceeding forty to fifty miles a day, but he kept vigorously going within the limit, this year and for several years after. His wife, though an indifferent walker, could almost equal him in cycle distances.

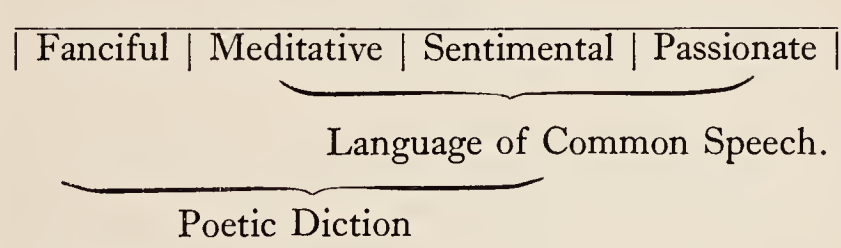
In October his sonnet on the departure of the troops for the Boer War, which he witnessed at Southampton, appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*, and in November the very popular verses called "The Going of the Battery" were printed in the *Graphic*, the scene having been witnessed at Dorchester. In December "The Dead Drummer" (afterwards called "Drummer Hodge") appeared in *Literature*, and "A Christmas Ghost Story" in the *Westminster Gazette*.

The latter months of this same year (1899) were saddened for him by the sudden death of Sir Arthur Blomfield, shortly before the date which had been fixed for a visit to him at Broadway by Hardy and his wife. Thus was snapped a friendship which had extended over thirty-six years.

Hardy's memoranda on his thoughts and movements —particularly the latter—which never reached the regularity of a diary—had of late grown more and more fitful, and now (1900) that novels were past and done with, nearly ceased altogether, such notes on scenes and functions having been dictated by what he had thought practical necessity; so that it becomes difficult to ascertain what mainly occupied his mind, or what his social doings were. His personal ambition in a worldly sense, which had always been weak, dwindled to nothing, and for some years after 1895 or 1896 he requested that no record of his life should be made. His verses he kept on writing from pleasure in them. The poetic fantasy entitled "The Souls of the Slain" was published in the *Cornhill* in the April of this year,

and he and his wife went to London this month according to custom, though instead of taking a flat or house as in former years they stayed on at the West Central Hotel in Southampton Row. He possibly thought it advisable to economize, seeing that he had sacrificed the chance of making a much larger income by not producing more novels. When one considers that he might have made himself a man of affluence in a few years by taking the current of popularity as it served, writing "best sellers", and ringing changes upon the novels he had already written, his bias towards poetry must have been instinctive and disinterested.

In a pocket-book of this date appears a diagram illustrating "the language of verse":



and the following note thereon:

"The confusion of thought to be observed in Wordsworth's teaching in his essay in the Appendix to *Lyrical Ballads* seems to arise chiefly out of his use of the word 'imagination'. He should have put the matter somewhat like this: In works of *passion and sentiment* (not 'imagination and sentiment') the language of verse is the language of prose. In works of *fancy* (or *imagination*), 'poetic diction' (of the real kind) is proper, and even necessary. The diagram illustrates my meaning."

For some reason he spent time while here in hunting up Latin hymns at the British Museum, and copies that he made of several have been found, of dates ranging from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, by Thomas of

Celano, Adam of S. Victor, John Mombaer, Jacob Balde, etc. That English prosody might be enriched by adapting some of the verse-forms of these is not unlikely to have been his view.

When they left London this year is uncertain, but we find Hardy at the latter part of July bicycling about Dorset with his friend Mr. (later Sir) Hamo Thornycroft, and in August entertaining Mr. A. E. Housman, Mr. Clodd, and Sir Frederick Pollock, bicycling from Max Gate to Portland Bill and back in one day with the last named, a performance whose chief onerousness lay in roughness of road surface and steepness of gradient. Cycling went merrily along through August, September, and into October, mostly with Mrs. Hardy and other companions, reaching to the outskirts of the county and into Somerset, Devon, and Hants. In October, declining to be interviewed by the representative of the American National Red Cross Society, he wrote as a substitute:

"A society for the relief of suffering is entitled to every man's gratitude; and though, in the past century, material growth has been out of all proportion to moral growth, the existence of your Society leaves one not altogether without hope that during the next hundred years the relations between our inward and our outward progress may become less of a reproach to civilization."

In the same month he replied to the Rev. J. Alexander Smith:

"On referring to the incident in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* to which you draw my attention, I do not find there anything more than an opinion, or feeling, on lay baptism by a person who was nettled at having his clerical ministration of the rite repulsed. The truth or error of his opinion is therefore immaterial. Nevertheless if it were worth while it might be plausibly argued that to refuse clerical performance and substitute lay performance not from necessity but from pure obstinacy (as he held), might

deprive that particular instance of lay baptism of its validity."

At the very close of the year Hardy's much admired poem on the Century's End, entitled "The Darkling Thrush", was published in a periodical.

[END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.]

CHAPTER VII

"POEMS OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT", AND OTHERS

1901–1903: *Aet.* 60–63

MAY found them in London, and hearing music. At an Ysaye Concert at Queen's Hall a passage in the descriptive programme evidently struck him—whether with amusement at the personifications in the rhetoric, or admiration for it, is not mentioned—for he takes the trouble to copy it:

" 'The solo enters at the twelfth bar. . . . Later in the movement a new theme is heard—a brief episode, the thematic material of the opening sufficing the composer's needs. In the Adagio the basses announce and develop a figure. Over this the soloists and first violins enter', etc. (Bach's Concerto in E.) I see them: black-headed, lark-spurred fellows, marching in on five wires."

"*May* 11. Leslie Stephen says: 'The old ideals have become obsolete, and the new are not yet constructed. . . . We cannot write living poetry on the ancient model. The gods and heroes are too dead, and we cannot seriously sympathize with . . . the idealized prize-fighter.' "

A few days later Hardy chronicles a feat of execution by Kubelik at a concert he attended at St. James's Hall —that of playing "pizzicato" on his violin the air of "The Last Rose of Summer" with Ernst's variations, and fingering and bowing a rapid accompaniment at the same time. At Mr. Maurice Hewlett's Madame Sarah Bernhardt talked to him pensively on her consciousness that she

was getting old, but on his taking his wife a day or two later to see her as the Duc in M. Rostand's *L'Aiglon* she appeared youthful enough, he said, "though unfortunately too melodramatically lime-lighted for naturalness".

At the end of the month the well-known literary and journalistic fraternity called the Whitefriars Club paid Hardy a visit at Max Gate, where they were entertained in a tent on the lawn. To diversify their journey from London they had travelled the last ten miles by road in open carriages, and the beautiful new summer dresses of the ladies were encrusted with dust. But nobody minded —except perhaps some of the ladies themselves—and the visit was a most lively one, though the part of the country they had driven through was not the most picturesque part.

Thomas Hardy's mother, now in her eighty-eighth year, was greatly interested to hear of this visit of the Club to the home of her son. Her devoted daughters, Mary and Katherine, promised to take her in her wheeled chair, for she was no longer able to walk abroad as formerly, to see the carriages drive past the end of a lane leading from Higher Bockhampton to the foot of Yellowham Hill, some three miles from Max Gate.

On the day appointed, the chair, its two attendants, and its occupant, a little bright-eyed lady in a shady hat, waited under some trees bordering the roadside for the members of the Whitefriars Club to pass.

Mrs. Hardy had announced gaily that she intended to wave her handkerchief to the travellers, but her more sedate daughters urged that this was not to be done. However, as soon as the dusty vehicles had whirled past the old lady pulled out a handkerchief which she had concealed under the rug covering her knees, and waved it triumphantly at the disappearing party. So unquenchable was her gay and youthful spirit even when approaching her ninetieth year.

Long afterwards one member of the visiting party said to the present writer: "If we had known who that was, what cheers there would have been, what waving of handkerchiefs, what a greeting for Thomas Hardy's mother!"

In a letter on Rationalism written about this time, but apparently not sent, he remarks:

"My own interest lies largely in non-rationalistic subjects, since non-rationality seems, so far as one can perceive, to be the principle of the Universe. By which I do not mean foolishness, but rather a principle for which there is no exact name, lying at the indifference point between rationality and irrationality."

In reply to the letter of an inquirer as to the preservation of the prospect from Richmond Hill, he wrote, 10th June 1901:

"I have always been in love with Richmond Hill—the Lass included—and though I think I could produce a few specimens from this part of the country that would be fairly even with it, or her, in point of beauty, I am grieved to hear that the world-famed view is in danger of disfigurement. I cannot believe that any such foolish local policy will be persevered in."

To Dr. Arnaldo Cervesato of Rome.

"*June* 20, 1901.

"I do not think that there will be any permanent revival of the old transcendental ideals; but I think there may gradually be developed an Idealism of Fancy; that is, an idealism in which fancy is no longer tricked out and made to masquerade as belief, but is frankly and honestly accepted as an imaginative solace in the lack of any substantial solace to be found in life."

"*July* 8. Pictures. My weakness has always been to prefer the large intention of an unskilful artist to the

THOMAS HARDY, AGED 60

trivial intention of an accomplished one: in other words, I am more interested in the high ideas of a feeble executant than in the high execution of a feeble thinker."

During the seven weeks ensuing he was preparing for the press a number of lyrics and other verses which had accumulated since *Wessex Poems* appeared, and sent off the manuscript to the publishers at the end of August. It was published in the middle of November under the title of *Poems of the Past and the Present*. He seems to have taken no notice of the reception accorded to the book by the press, though it might have flattered him to find that some characteristic ideas in this volume—which he never tried to make consistent—such as in the pieces entitled "The Sleep-worker", "The Lacking Sense", "Doom and She", and others—ideas that were further elaborated in *The Dynasts*, found their way into many prose writings after this date.

On the last day of the year he makes the following reflection: "After reading various philosophic systems, and being struck with their contradictions and futilities, I have come to this: *Let every man make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience*. He will not be able to escape using terms and phraseology from earlier philosophers, but let him avoid adopting their theories if he values his own mental life. Let him remember the fate of Coleridge, and save years of labour by working out his own views as given him by his surroundings."

"*January* 1 (1902). A Pessimist's apology. Pessimism (or rather what is called such) is, in brief, playing the sure game. You cannot lose at it; you may gain. It is the only view of life in which you can never be disappointed. Having reckoned what to do in the worst possible circumstances, when better arise, as they may, life becomes child's play."

In reply this month to a writer in the Parisian *Revue*

Bleue he gave it as his opinion that the effect of the South African War on English literature had been:

"A vast multiplication of books on the war itself, and the issue of large quantities of warlike and patriotic poetry. These works naturally throw into the shade works that breathe a more quiet and philosophic spirit; a curious minor feature in the case among a certain class of writers being the disguise under Christian terminology of principles not necessarily wrong from the point of view of international politics, but obviously anti-Christian, because inexorable and masterful."

In view of the approaching centenary of Victor Hugo's birth, Hardy, amongst other European men of letters, was asked at this time by a Continental paper for a brief tribute to the genius of the poet; and he sent the following:

"His memory must endure. His works are the cathedrals of literary architecture, his imagination adding greatness to the colossal and charm to the small."

"*March.* Poetry. There is a latent music in the sincere utterance of deep emotion, however expressed, which fills the place of the actual word-music in rhythmic phraseology on thinner emotive subjects, or on subjects with next to none at all. And supposing a total poetic effect to be represented by a unit, its component fractions may be either, say:

"Emotion three-quarters, plus Expression one quarter, or

"Emotion one quarter, plus Expression three-quarters.

"This suggested conception seems to me to be the only one which explains all cases, including those instances of verse that apparently infringe all rules, and yet bring unreasoned convictions that they are poetry."

In April of this year he was writing "A Trampwoman's Tragedy"—a ballad based on some local story of an event

more or less resembling the incidents embodied, which took place between 1820 and 1830. Hardy considered this, upon the whole, his most successful poem.

To Mr. (afterwards Sir) Rider Haggard, who was investigating the conditions of agriculture and agricultural labourers, he gave the following information:

"*March*, 1902.

"MY DEAR HAGGARD,

"As to your first question, my opinion on the past of the agricultural labourers in this county: I think, indeed know, that down to 1850 or 1855 their condition was in general one of great hardship. I say in general, for there have always been fancy-farms, resembling St. Clair's in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, whereon they lived as smiling exceptions to those of their class all around them. I recall one such, the estate-owner being his own farmer, and ultimately ruining himself by his hobby. To go to the other extreme: as a child I knew a sheep-keeping boy who to my horror shortly afterwards died of want—the contents of his stomach at the autopsy being raw turnip only. His father's wages were six shillings a week, with about two pounds at harvest, a cottage rent free, and an allowance of thorn faggots from the hedges as fuel. Between these examples came the great bulk of farms—wages whereon ranged from seven to nine shillings a week, and perquisites being better in proportion.

"Secondly: as to the present. Things are of course widely different now. I am told that at the annual hiring-fair just past, the old positions were absolutely reversed, the farmers walking about and importuning the labourers to come and be hired, instead of, as formerly, the labourers anxiously entreating the stolid farmers to take them on at any pittance. Their present life is almost without exception one of comfort, if the most ordinary thrift be observed. I could take you to the cottage of a shepherd not many miles from here that has a carpet and brass-rods to the

staircase, and from the open door of which you hear a piano strumming within. Of course bicycles stand by the doorway, while at night a large paraffin lamp throws out a perfect blaze of light upon the passer-by.

"The son of another labourer I know takes dancing lessons at a quadrille-class in the neighbouring town. Well, why not?

"But changes at which we must all rejoice have brought other changes which are not so attractive. The labourers have become more and more migratory—the younger families in especial, who enjoy nothing so much as fresh scenery and new acquaintance. The consequences are curious and unexpected. For one thing, village tradition —a vast mass of unwritten folk-lore, local chronicle, local topography, and nomenclature—is absolutely sinking, has nearly sunk, into eternal oblivion. I cannot recall a single instance of a labourer who still lives on the farm where he was born, and I can only recall a few who have been five years on their present farms. Thus you see, there being no continuity of environment in their lives, there is no continuity of information, the names, stories, and relics of one place being speedily forgotten under the incoming facts of the next. For example, if you ask one of the workfolk (they always used to be called 'workfolk' hereabout—'labourers' is an imported word) the names of surrounding hills, streams; the character and circumstances of people buried in particular graves; at what spots parish personages lie interred; questions on local fairies, ghosts, herbs, etc., they can give no answer: yet I can recollect the time when the places of burial even of the poor and tombless were all remembered, and the history of the parish and squire's family for 150 years back known. Such and such ballads appertained to such and such a locality, ghost tales were attached to particular sites, and nooks wherein wild herbs grew for the cure of divers maladies were pointed out readily.

"On the subject of the migration to the towns I think I have printed my opinions from time to time: so that I will only say a word or two about it here. In this consideration the case of the farm labourers merges itself in that of rural cottagers generally, including jobbing labourers, artizans, and nondescripts of all sorts who go to make up the body of English villagery. That these people have removed to the towns of sheer choice during the last forty years it would be absurd to argue, except as to that percentage of young, adventurous, and ambitious spirits among them which is found in all societies. The prime cause of the removal is, unquestionably, insecurity of tenure. If they do not escape this in the towns it is not fraught with such trying consequences there as in a village, whence they may have to travel ten or twenty miles to find another house and other work. Moreover, if in a town lodging an honest man's daughter should have an illegitimate child, or his wife should take to drinking, he is not compelled by any squire to pack up his furniture and get his living elsewhere, as is, or was lately, too often the case in the country. (I am neither attacking nor defending this order of things; I merely relate it: the landlord sometimes had reason on his side; sometimes not).

"Now why such migrations to cities did not largely take place till within the last forty years or so is, I think (in respect of farm labourers), that they had neither the means nor the knowledge in old times that they have now. And owing to the then stability of villagers of the other class—such as mechanics and small traders, the backbone of village life—they had not the inclination. The tenure of these latter was, down to about fifty years ago, a fairly secure one, even if they were not in the possession of small freeholds. The custom of granting leaseholds for three lives, or other life-holding privileges, obtained largely in our villages, and though tenures by lifehold may not be ideally good or fair, they did at least serve the purpose of

keeping the native population at home. Villages in which there is not now a single cottager other than a weekly tenant were formerly occupied almost entirely on the life-hold principle, the term extending over seventy or a hundred years; and the young man who knows that he is secure of his father's and grandfather's cottage for his own lifetime thinks twice and three times before he embarks on the uncertainties of a wandering career. Now though, as I have said, these cottagers were not often farm labourers, their permanency reacted on the farm labourers, and made their lives with such comfortable associates better worth living.

"Thirdly: as to the future, the evils of instability, and the ultimate results from such a state of things, it hardly becomes me to attempt to prophesy here. That remedies exist for them and are easily applicable you will easily gather from what I have stated above."

"*April* 20. Vagg Hollow, on the way to Load Bridge (Somerset) is a place where 'things' used to be seen—usually taking the form of a wool-pack in the middle of the road. Teams and other horses always stopped on the brow of the hollow, and could only be made to go on by whipping. A waggoner once cut at the pack with his whip: it opened in two, and smoke and a hoofed figure rose out of it."

"*May* 1. Life is what we make it as Whist is what we make it; but not as Chess is what we make it; which ranks higher as a purely intellectual game than either Whist or Life."

Letter sent to and printed in *The Academy and Literature*, May 17, 1902, concerning a review of Maeterlinck's *Apology for Nature*:

"SIR,

"In your review of M. Maeterlinck's book you quote with seeming approval his vindication of Nature's ways, which is (as I understand it) to the effect that, though she does not appear to be just from our point of view, she may practise a scheme of morality unknown to us, in which she is just. Now, admit but the bare possibility of such a hidden morality, and she would go out of court without the slightest stain on her character, so certain should we feel that indifference to morality was beneath her greatness.

"Far be it from my wish to distrust any comforting fantasy, if it can be barely tenable. But alas, no profound reflection can be needed to detect the sophistry in M. Maeterlinck's argument, and to see that the original difficulty recognized by thinkers like Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Haeckel, etc., and by most of the persons called pessimists, remains unsurmounted.

"Pain has been, and pain is: no new sort of morals in Nature can remove pain from the past and make it pleasure for those who are its infallible estimators, the bearers thereof. And no injustice, however slight, can be atoned for by her future generosity, however ample, so long as we consider Nature to be, or to stand for, unlimited power. The exoneration of an omnipotent Mother by her retrospective justice becomes an absurdity when we ask, what made the foregone injustice necessary to her Omnipotence?

"So you cannot, I fear, save her good name except by assuming one of two things: that she is blind and not a judge of her actions, or that she is an automaton, and unable to control them: in either of which assumptions, though you have the chivalrous satisfaction of screening one of her sex, you only throw responsibility a stage further back.

"But the story is not new. It is true, nevertheless, that, as M. Maeterlinck contends, to dwell too long amid such

reflections does no good, and that to model our conduct on Nature's apparent conduct, as Nietzsche would have taught, can only bring disaster to humanity.

"Yours truly,

"THOMAS HARDY.

"MAX GATE, DORCHESTER."

In June Hardy was engaged in a correspondence in the pages of the *Dorset County Chronicle* on Edmund Kean's connection with Dorchester, which town he visited as a player before he became famous, putting up with his wife and child at an inn called "The Little Jockey" on Glyde-Path Hill (standing in Hardy's time). His child died whilst here, and was buried in Trinity Churchyard near at hand. The entry in the register runs as follows:

"Burials in the Parish of Holy Trinity in Dorchester in the County of Dorset in the year 1813:

"Name, Howard, son of Edmund and Mary Kean. Abode, Residing at Glyde Path Hill in this Parish. When buried, Nov. 24. Age 4. By whom the Ceremony was performed, Henry John Richman."

Readers of the life of Kean will remember the heaviness of heart with which he noted his experience at Dorchester on this occasion—that it was a very wet night, that there was a small audience, that, unless we are mistaken, the play was *Coriolanus* (fancy playing *Coriolanus* at Dorchester *now!*), that he performed his part badly. Yet he was standing on the very brink of fame, for it was on this very occasion that the emissary from Old Drury—Arnold, the stage manager—witnessed his performance, and decided that he was the man for the London boards.

In his letters to the paper under the pseudonym of "History" Hardy observed:

"Your correspondent 'Dorset' who proposes to 'turn the hose' upon the natural interest of Dorchester people in Edmund Kean, should, I think, first turn the hose upon

his own uncharitableness. His contention amounts to this, that because one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, of English tragedians was not without blemish in his morals, no admiration is to be felt for his histrionic achievements or regard for the details of his life. So, then, Lord Nelson should have no place in our sentiment, nor Burns, nor Byron—not even Shakespeare himself—nor unhappily many another great man whose flesh has been weak. With amusing maladroitness your correspondent calls himself by the name of the county which has lately commemorated King Charles the Second—a worthy who seduced scores of men's wives to Kean's one.

"Kean was, in truth, a sorely tried man, and it is no wonder that he may have succumbed. The illegitimate child of a struggling actress, the vicissitudes and hardships of his youth and young manhood left him without moral ballast when the fire of his genius brought him success and adulation. The usual result followed, and owing to the publicity of his life it has been his misfortune ever since to have, like Cassius in *Julius Cæsar*,

> All his faults observed,
> Set in a note-book, learn'd and conn'd by rote,

by people who show the Christian feeling of your correspondent."

The following week Hardy sent a supplementary note:

"One word as to the building [in Dorchester] in which Kean performed in 1813. There is little doubt that it was in the old theatre yet existing [though not as such], stage and all, at the back of Messrs. Godwin's china shop; and for these among other reasons. A new theatre in North Square [Qy. Back West Street?], built by Curme, was opened in February 1828, while there are still dwellers in Dorchester who have heard persons speak of seeing plays in the older theatre about 1821 or 1822, Kean's visit having been only a few years earlier."

During the latter half of this year 1902 Hardy was working more or less on the first part of *The Dynasts*, which was interrupted in August and September by bicycle trips, and in October by a short stay in Bath, where the cycling was continued. On one of these occasions, having reached Bristol by road, and suddenly entered on the watered streets, he came off into the mud with a side-slip, and was rubbed down by a kindly coal-heaver with one of his sacks. In this condition he caught sight of some rare old volume in a lumber-shop; and looking him up and down when he asked the price, the woman who kept the shop said: "Well, sixpence won't hurt ye, I suppose?" He used to state that if he had proposed threepence he would doubtless have got the volume.

To a correspondent who was preparing a Report on Capital Punishment for the Department of Economics, Stanford University, California, and who asked for the expression of his opinion on the advisability of abolishing it in highly civilized communities, he replied about this time:

"As an acting magistrate I think that Capital Punishment operates as a deterrent from deliberate crimes against life to an extent that no other form of punishment can rival. But the question of the moral right of a community to inflict that punishment is one I cannot enter into in this necessarily brief communication."

It may be observed that the writer describes himself as an "acting magistrate", yet he acted but little at sessions. He was not infrequently, however, on Grand Juries at the Assizes, where he would meet with capital offences.

Returning to the country in July he sat down to finish the first part of *The Dynasts*, the MS. of which was sent to the Messrs. Macmillan at the end of September. He then corrected the proofs of "A Trampwoman's Tragedy" for the *North American Review*, in which pages it was pub-

lished in November. When the ballad was read in England by the few good judges who met with it, they reproached Hardy with sending it out of the country for publication, not knowing that it was first offered to the *Cornhill Magazine*, and declined by the editor on the ground of it not being a poem he could possibly print in a family periodical. That there was any impropriety in the verses had never struck the author at all, nor did it strike any readers, so far as he was aware.

In December he answered an inquiry addressed to him by the editor of *L'Européen*, an international journal published in Paris:

"I would say that I am not of opinion that France is in a decadent state. Her history seems to take the form of a serrated line, thus:

and a true judgement of her general tendency cannot be based on a momentary observation, but must extend over whole periods of variation.

"What will sustain France as a nation is, I think, her unique accessibility to new ideas, and her ready power of emancipation from those which reveal themselves to be *effete*."

In the same month of December the first part of *The Dynasts* was published.

It was some time in this year that Hardy, in concurrence with his brother and sisters, erected in Stinsford Church a brass tablet to commemorate the connection of his father, grandfather, and uncle with the musical services there in the early part of the previous century—the west gallery, wherein their ministrations had covered altogether about forty years, having been removed some sixty years

before this date. The inscription on the brass runs as follows:

> Memoriae · Sacrum · Thomae · Hardy · patris · Jacobi · et · Thomae filiorum · qui · olim · in · hac · Ecclesia · per · annos · quadraginta (MDCCCII — MDCCCXLI) · fidicinis · munere · sunt · perfuncti. Ponendum · curaverunt · Thomae · junioris · filii · et · filiae: Thomas: Henricus: Maria: Catherina. MDCCCCIII.

In drawing up this inscription Hardy was guided by his belief that the English language was liable to undergo great alterations in the future, whereas Latin would remain unchanged.

CHAPTER VIII

PART FIRST OF "THE DYNASTS"

1904–1905: *Aet.* 63–65

As *The Dynasts* contained ideas of some freshness, and was not a copy of something else, a large number of critics were too puzzled by it to be unprejudiced. The appraisement of the work was in truth, while nominally literary, at the core narrowly Philistine, and even theosophic. Its author had erroneously supposed that by writing a frank preface on his method—that the scheme of the drama was based on a tentative theory of things which seemed to accord with the mind of the age; but that whether such theory did or not so accord, and whether it were true or false, little affected his object, which was a poetical one wherein nothing more was necessary than that the theory should be plausible—a polemic handling of his book would be avoided. Briefly, that the drama being advanced not as a reasoned system of philosophy, nor as a new philosophy, but as a poem, with the discrepancies that are to be expected in an imaginative work, as such it would be read.

However, the latitude claimed was allowed but in few instances, and an unfavourable reception was pretty general, the substance of which was "On what ground do you arrogate to yourself a right to express in poetry a philosophy which has never been expressed in poetry before?"

Notwithstanding his hopes, he had a suspicion that such might be the case, as we may gather from a note he had written:

"The old theologies may or may not have worked for good in their time. But they will not bear stretching further in epic or dramatic art. The Greeks used up theirs: the Jews used up theirs: the Christians have used up theirs. So that one must make an independent plunge, embodying the real, if only temporary, thought of the age. But I expect that I shall catch it hot and strong for attempting it!"

Hardy replied to one of these criticisms written by the dramatic critic of *The Times* in the *Literary Supplement* (*Time's Literary Supplement*, Feb. 5 and Feb. 19, 1904), but did not make many private memoranda on the reviews. One memorandum is as follows:

"I suppose I have handicapped myself by expressing, both in this drama and previous verse, philosophies and feelings as yet not well established or formally adopted into the general teaching; and by thus over-stepping the standard boundary set up for the thought of the age by the proctors of opinion, I have thrown back my chance of acceptance in poetry by many years. The very fact of my having tried to spread over art the latest illumination of the time has darkened counsel in respect of me.

"What the reviewers really assert is, not 'This is an untrue and inartistic view of life', but 'This is not the view of life that we people who thrive on conventions can permit to be painted'. If, instead of the machinery I adopted, I had constructed a theory of a world directed by fairies, nobody would have objected, and the critics would probably have said, 'What a charming fancy of Mr. Hardy's!' But having chosen a scheme which may or may not be a valid one, but is presumably much nearer reality than the fancy of a world ordered by fairies would be, they straightway lift their brows."

Writing to his friend Edward Clodd on March 22, he says:

"I did not quite think that the *Dynasts* would suit

your scientific mind, or shall I say the scientific side of your mind, so that I am much pleased to hear that you have got pleasure out of it.

"As to my having said nothing or little (I think I did just allude to it a long while ago) about having it in hand, the explanation is simple enough—I did not mean to publish Part I. by itself until after a quite few days before I sent it up to the publishers: and to be engaged in a desultory way on a MS. which may be finished in five years (the date at which I thought I might print it, complete) does not lead one to say much about it. On my return here from London I had a sudden feeling that I should never carry the thing any further, so off it went. But now I am better inclined to go on with it. Though I rather wish I had kept back the parts till the whole could be launched, as I at first intended.

"What you say about the 'Will' is true enough, if you take the word in its ordinary sense. But in the lack of another word to express precisely what is meant, a secondary sense has gradually arisen, that of effort exercised in a reflex or unconscious manner. Another word would have been better if one could have had it, though 'Power' would not do, as power can be suspended or withheld, and the forces of Nature cannot: However, there are inconsistences in the Phantoms, no doubt. But that was a point to which I was somewhat indifferent, since they are not supposed to be more than the best human intelligences of their time in a sort of quint-essential form. I speak of the 'Years'. The 'Pities' are, of course, merely Humanity, with all its weaknesses.

"You speak of Meredith. I am sorry to learn that he has been so seriously ill. Leslie Stephen gone too. They are thinning out ahead of us. I have just lost an old friend down here, of forty-seven years' standing. A man whose opinions differed almost entirely from my own on most subjects, and yet he was a good and sincere friend—the brother of

the present Bishop of Durham, and like him in old-fashioned views of the Evangelical school."

His mind was, however, drawn away from the perils of attempting to express his age in poetry by a noticeable change in his mother's state of health. She was now in her ninety-first year, and though she had long suffered from deafness was mentally as clear and alert as ever. She sank gradually, but it was not till two days before her death that she failed to comprehend his words to her. She died on Easter Sunday, April 3, and was buried at Stinsford in the grave of her husband. She had been a woman with an extraordinary store of local memories, reaching back to the days when the ancient ballads were everywhere heard at country feasts, in weaving shops, and at spinning-wheels; and her good taste in literature was expressed by the books she selected for her children in circumstances in which opportunities for selection were not numerous. The portraits of her which appeared in the *Sphere*, the *Gentlewoman*, the *Book Monthly*, and other papers—the best being from a painting by her daughter Mary—show a face of dignity and judgement.

A month earlier he had sent a reply to the Rev. S. Whittell Key, who had inquired of him concerning "sport":

"I am not sufficiently acquainted with the many varieties of sport to pronounce which is, quantitatively, the most cruel. I can only say generally that the prevalence of those sports which consist in the pleasure of watching a fellow-creature, weaker or less favoured than ourselves, in its struggles, by Nature's poor resources only, to escape the death-agony we mean to inflict by the treacherous contrivances of science, seems one of the many convincing proofs that we have not yet emerged from barbarism.

"In the present state of affairs there would appear to be no logical reason why the smaller children, say, of overcrowded families, should not be used for sporting purposes. Darwin has revealed that there would be no

difference in principle; moreover, these children would often escape lives intrinsically less happy than those of wild birds and other animals."

During May he was in London reading at the British Museum on various days—probably historic details that bore upon *The Dynasts*—and went to Sunday concerts at the Queen's Hall, and to afternoon services at St. Paul's whenever he happened to be near the Cathedral, a custom of his covering many years before and after.

On June 28 *The Times* published the following letter:

"SIR,

"I should like to be allowed space to express in the fewest words a view of Count Tolstoy's philosophic sermon on war, of which you print a translation in your impression of to-day and a comment in your leading article.

"The sermon may show many of the extravagances of detail to which the world has grown accustomed in Count Tolstoy's later writings. It may exhibit, here and there, incoherence as a moral system. Many people may object to the second half of the dissertation—its special application to Russia in the present war (on which I can say nothing). Others may be unable to see advantage in the writer's use of theological terms for describing and illustrating the moral evolutions of past ages. But surely all these objectors should be hushed by his great argument, and every defect in his particular reasonings hidden by the blaze of glory that shines from his masterly general indictment of war as a modern principle, with all its senseless and illogical crimes.

"Your obedient servant,

"THOMAS HARDY."

Again in the country in August, Hardy resumed his cycling tours, meeting by accident Mr. William Watson, Mr. Francis Coutts (Lord Latymer), and Mr. John Lane

at Glastonbury, and spending a romantic day or two there among the ruins.

In October Hardy learnt by letter from Madras of the death of Mrs. Malcolm Nicolson—the gifted and impassioned poetess known as "Laurence Hope", whom he had met in London; and he wrote a brief obituary notice of her in the *Athenæum* at the end of the month. But beyond this, and the aforesaid newspaper letters, he appears to have printed very little during this year 1904. A German translation of *Life's Little Ironies* was published in *Aus fremden Zungen*, in Berlin, and a French translation of *The Well-Beloved* undertaken.

His memoranda get more and more meagre as the years go on, until we are almost entirely dependent on letter-references, reviews, and casual remarks of his taken down by the present writer. It is a curious reversal of what is usually found in lives, where notes and diaries grow more elaborate with maturity of years. But it accords with Hardy's frequent saying that he took little interest in himself as a person, and his absolute refusal at all times to write his reminiscences.

In January (1905) he served as Grand Juror at the winter Assizes, and in the latter part of the month met Dr. Shipley, Mr. Asquith, Lord Monteagle, Sir Edgar Vincent, and others at a dinner at the National Club given by Mr. Gosse. At this time he was much interested in the paintings of Zurbaran, which he preferred to all others of the old Spanish school, venturing to think that they might some day be held in higher estimation than those of Velasquez.

About this time the romantic poem entitled "A Noble Lady's Tale" was printed in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

The first week in April Hardy left Dorchester for London *en route* for Aberdeen, the ancient University of which city had offered him the honorary degree of LL.D. In accepting it he remarked:

"I am impressed by its coming from Aberdeen, for though a stranger to that part of Scotland to a culpable extent I have always observed with admiration the exceptional characteristics of the northern University, which in its fostering encouragement of mental effort seems to cast an eye over these islands that is unprejudiced, unbiassed, and unsleeping."

It was a distance of near 700 miles by the route he would have to take—almost as far as to the Pyrenees—and over the northern stage of it winter still lingered; but his journey there and back was an easy one. The section from Euston Square to the north was performed in a train of sleeping-cars which crunched through the snow as if it were January, the occasion coinciding with the opening of the new sculpture gallery, a function that brought many visitors from London. Hardy was hospitably entertained at the Chanonry Lodge, Old Aberdeen, by Principal and Mrs. Marshall Lang, which was the beginning of a friendship that lasted till the death of the Principal. Among others who received the like honour at the same time were Professor Bury and Lord Reay.

In the evening there was a reception in the Mitchell Hall, Marischal College, made lively by Scotch reels and bagpipers; and the next day, after attending at the formal opening of the sculpture gallery, he was a guest at the Corporation Dinner at the Town Hall, where friends were warm, but draughts were keen to one from a southern county, and speeches, though good, so long that he and the Principal did not get back to Chanonry Lodge till one o'clock.

On Sunday morning Hardy visited spots in and about Aberdeen associated with Byron and others, and lunched at the Grand Hotel by the invitation of Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Murray, dining at the same place with the same host, crossing hands in "Auld Lang Syne" with delightful people whom he had never seen before and, alas, never

saw again. This was the "hearty way" (as it would be called in Wessex) in which they did things in the snowy north. To Hardy the whole episode of Aberdeen, he said, was of a most pleasant and unexpected kind, and it remained with him like a romantic dream.

Passing through London on his way south he breakfasted at the Athenæum, where he was shocked to learn of the death of his friend Lord St. Helier (Sir Francis Jeune), who had been ailing more or less since the loss of his only son in the previous August. Hardy on his way down to Dorset was led to think of the humorous stories connected with the Divorce Court that the genial judge sometimes had told him when they were walking in the woods of Arlington Manor in the summer holidays; among them the tale of that worthy couple who wished to be divorced but disliked the idea of such an unpleasant person as a co-respondent being concerned in it, and so hit upon the plan of doing without him. The husband, saying he was going to Liverpool for a day or two, got a private detective to watch his house; but instead of leaving stayed in London, and at the dead of night went to his own house in disguise, and gave a signal. His wife came down in her dressing-gown and let him in softly, letting him out again before it was light. When the husband inquired of the detective he was informed that there was ample evidence; and the divorce was duly obtained.

Hardy could not remember whether it was a story of the same couple or of another, in which Sir Francis had related that being divorced they grew very fond of each other, the former wife becoming the husband's mistress, and living happily with him ever after.

As they had taken a flat at Hyde Park Mansions for this spring and summer Hardy did not stay long in Dorset, and they entered the flat the week before Easter. During April he followed up Tchaikowsky at the Queen's Hall

concerts, saying of the impetuous march-piece in the third movement of the Pathetic Symphony that it was the only music he knew that was able to make him feel exactly as if he were in a battle.

"*May* 5. To the Lord Mayor's farewell banquet to Mr. Choate at the Mansion House. Thought of the continuity of the institution, and the teeming history of the spot. A graceful speech by Arthur Balfour: a less graceful but more humorous one by Mr. Choate. Spoke to many whom I knew. Sat between Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity, and Sir J. Ramsay. Came home with Sir F. Pollock."

This month he was seeing Ben Jonson's play, *The Silent Woman*, and Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* and *Man and Superman*, and went to the Royal Society's Conversazione; though for some days confined to the house by a sore throat and cough. At a lunch given by Sidney Lee at the Garrick Club in June he talked about Shakespeare with Sir Henry Irving, and was reconfirmed in his opinion that actors never see a play as a whole and in true perspective, but in a false perspective from the shifting point of their own part in it, Sir Henry having shied at Hardy's suggestion that he should take the part of Jaques.

In this June, too, he paid a promised visit to Swinburne, and had a long talk with him; also with Mr. Watts-Dunton. "Swinburne's grey eyes are extraordinarily bright still—the brightness of stars that do not twinkle —planets namely. In spite of the nervous twitching of his feet he looked remarkably boyish and well, and rather impish. He told me he could walk twenty miles a day, and was only an old man in his hearing, his sight being as good as ever. He spoke with amusement of a paragraph he had seen in a Scottish paper: 'Swinburne planteth, Hardy watereth, and Satan giveth the increase.' He has had no honours offered him. Said that when he was nearly drowned his thought was, 'My *Bothwell* will never be finished!' That the secret reason for Lady Byron's dis-

missal of Lord Byron was undoubtedly his *liaison* with Augusta. His (Swinburne's) mother [Lady Jane, *née* Ashburnham] used to say that it was the talk of London at the time. That the last time he visited his friend Landor the latter said plaintively that as he wrote only in a dead language (Latin), and a dying language (English), he would soon be forgotten. Talking of poets, he said that once Mrs. Procter told him that Leigh Hunt on a visit to her father one day brought an unknown youth in his train and introduced him casually as Mr. John Keats. (I think, by the way, that she also told me of the incident.[1]) We laughed and condoled with each other on having been the two most abused of living writers; he for *Poems and Ballads*, I for *Jude the Obscure*."

Later on in June he went to Mr. Walter Tyndale's exhibition of Wessex pictures, some of which Hardy had suggested, and during the remainder of their stay in London they did little more than entertain a few friends at Hyde Park Mansions, and dine and lunch with others.

"*June* 26, 1905. To the Hon. Sec. of the Shakespeare Memorial Committee:

"I fear that I shall have to leave town before the meeting of the Committee takes place.

"All I would say on the form of the Memorial is that one which embodies the calling of an important *street* or *square* after Shakespeare would seem to be as effectual a means as any of keeping his name on the tongues of citizens, and his personality in their minds."

In July they went back to Dorset. Here, in the same month, a Nelson-and-Hardy exhibition was opened in Dorchester, the relics shown being mainly those of the Captain of the *Victory*, who had been born and lived near, and belonged to a branch of the Dorset Hardys, the subject of this memoir belonging to another.

On September 1 Hardy received a visit from 200

[1] See *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*, p. 177.

members of the Institute of Journalists at their own suggestion, as they had arranged a driving tour through his part of the country. There was an understanding that no interviews should be printed, and to this they honourably adhered. Their idea had been a call on him only, but they were entertained at tea, for which purpose a tent 150 feet long had to be erected on Max Gate lawn. "The interior with the sun shining through formed a pretty scene when they were sitting down at the little tables", Mrs. Hardy remarks in a diary. "They all drove off in four-in-hand brakes and other vehicles to Bockhampton, Puddletown, Bere Regis, and Wool." After they had gone it came on to rain, and Hardy, returning from Dorchester at ten o'clock, met the vehicles coming back in a procession, empty; "the horses tired and steaming after their journey of thirty miles, and their coats and harness shining with rain and perspiration in the light of the lamps".

In pursuance of the above allusion to interviewing, it may be stated that there are interviewers and interviewers. It once happened that an interviewer came specially from London to Hardy to get his opinions for a popular morning paper. Hardy said positively that he would not be interviewed on any subject. "Very well", said the interviewer, "then back I go, my day and my expenses all wasted." Hardy felt sorry, his visitor seeming to be a gentlemanly and educated man, and said he did not see why he should hurry off, if he would give his word not to write anything. This was promised, and the interviewer stayed, and had lunch, and a pleasant couple of hours' conversation on all sorts of subjects that would have suited him admirably. Yet he honourably kept his promise, and not a word of his visit appeared anywhere in the pages of the paper.

In the middle of this month the 150th anniversary of the birth of the poet Crabbe at Aldeburgh in Suffolk was celebrated in that town, and Hardy accepted the invitation of Mr. Edward Clodd to be present. There were some

very good *tableaux vivants* of scenes from the poems exhibited in the Jubilee Hall, some good lectures on the poet, and a sermon also in the parish church on his life and work, all of which Hardy attended, honouring Crabbe as an apostle of realism who practised it in English literature three-quarters of a century before the French realistic school had been heard of.

Returning to Max Gate he finished the second part of *The Dynasts*—that second part which the New York *Tribune* and other papers had been positive would never be heard of, so ridiculous was the first—and sent off the MS. to the Messrs. Macmillan in the middle of October.

"*First week in November.* The order in which the leaves fall this year is: Chestnuts; Sycamores; Limes; Hornbeams; Elm; Birch; Beech."

A letter written November 5 of this year:

"All I know about my family history is that it is indubitably one of the several branches of the Dorset Hardys —having been hereabouts for centuries. But when or how it was connected with the branch to which Nelson's Hardy's people belonged—who have also been hereabouts for centuries—I cannot positively say.[1] The branches are always asserted locally to be connected, and no doubt are, and there is a strong family likeness. I have never investigated the matter, though my great-uncle knew the ramifications. The Admiral left no descendant in the male line, as you may know.

" As to your interesting remarks on honours for men of letters, I have always thought that any writer who has expressed unpalatable or possibly subversive views on society, religious dogma, current morals, and any other features of the existing order of things, and who wishes to be free and to express more if they occur to him, must feel

[1] Since writing the above I have received from a correspondent what seems to me indubitable proof of the connection of these two branches of the Hardy family.—F. E. H.

hampered by accepting honours from any government—which are different from academic honours offered for past attainments merely."

To Mr. Israel Zangwill on November 10:

"It would be altogether presumptuous in me—so entirely outside Jewish life—to express any positive opinion on the scheme embodied in the pamphlet you send to me. I can only say a word or two of the nature of a fancy. To found an autonomous Jewish state or colony, under British suzerainty or not, wears the look of a good practical idea, and it is possibly all the better for having no retrospective sentiment about it. But I cannot help saying that this retrospective sentiment among Jews is precisely the one I can best enter into.

"So that if I were a Jew I should be a rabid Zionist no doubt. I feel that the idea of ultimately getting to Palestine is the particular idea to make the imaginative among your people enthusiastic—'like unto them that dream'—as one of you said in a lyric which is among the finest in any tongue, to judge from its power in a translation. You, I suppose, read it in the original; I wish I could. (This is a digression.)

"The only plan that seems to me to reconcile the traditional feeling with the practical is that of regarding the proposed Jewish state on virgin soil as a stepping-stone to Palestine. A Jewish colony united and strong and grown wealthy in, say, East Africa, could make a bid for Palestine (as a sort of annexe)—say 100 years hence—with far greater effect than the race as scattered all over the globe can ever do; and who knows if by that time altruism may not have made such progress that the then ruler or rulers of Palestine, whoever they may be, may even hand it over to the expectant race, and gladly assist them, or part of them, to establish themselves there.

"This expectation, nursed throughout the formation

and development of the new territory, would at any rate be serviceable as an ultimate ideal to stimulate action. With such an idea lying behind the immediate one, perhaps the Zionists would reunite and co-operate with the New Territorialists.

"I have written, as I said, only a fancy. But, as I think you know, nobody outside Jewry can take a deeper interest than I do in a people of such extraordinary character and history; who brought forth, moreover, a young reformer who, though only in the humblest walk of life, became the most famous personage the world has ever known."

At the end of 1905 a letter reached him from a correspondent in the Philippine Islands telling him that to its writer he was "like some terrible old prophet crying in the wilderness".

CHAPTER IX

THE REMAINDER OF "THE DYNASTS"

1906–1908: *Aet.* 65–67

The Dynasts, Part II., was not published till the first week in February 1906, and its reception by the reviews was much more congratulatory than their reception of the first part, an American critical paper going so far as to say, "Who knows that this work may not turn out to be a masterpiece?"

This year they reoccupied the flat in Hyde Park Mansions that had been let to them by Lady Thompson the year before, and paid the customary visits to private views, concerts, and plays that are usually paid to such by people full of vigour from the country. Of the Wagner concerts he says:

"I prefer late Wagner, as I prefer late Turner, to early (which I suppose is all wrong in taste), the idiosyncrasies of each master being more strongly shown in these strains. When a man not contented with the grounds of his success goes on and on, and tries to achieve the impossible, then he gets profoundly interesting to me. To-day it was early Wagner for the most part: fine music, but not so particularly his—no spectacle of the inside of a brain at work like the inside of a hive."

An attack of influenza, which he usually got while sojourning in London, passed off, and they entertained many friends at the flat as usual, and went out to various

meetings and dinners, though he does not write them down in detail as when he thought he must. They included one at Vernon Lushington's, where Hardy was interested in the portrait of his host's father, the Lushington of the Lady Byron mystery, who kept his secret honourably; also a luncheon in a historic room weighted with its antiquity, the vaulted dining-room of the house in Dean's Yard then occupied by Dr. Wilberforce as Archdeacon of Westminster. It was this year that Hardy met Dr. Grieg, the composer, and his wife, and when, discussing Wagner music, he said to Grieg that the wind and rain through trees, iron railings, and keyholes fairly suggested Wagner music; to which the rival composer responded severely that he himself would sooner have the wind and rain.

On the 21st May the following letter, in which Hardy gives a glimpse of himself as a young man in London, appeared in *The Times*:

"Sir,

"This being the 100th anniversary of J. Stuart Mill's birth, and as writers like Carlyle, Leslie Stephen, and others have held that anything, however imperfect, which affords an idea of a human personage in his actual form and flesh, is of value in respect of him, the few following words on how one of the profoundest thinkers of the last century appeared forty years ago to the man in the street may be worth recording as a footnote to Mr. Morley's admirable estimate of Mill's life and philosophy in your impression of Friday.

"It was a day in 1865, about three in the afternoon, during Mill's candidature for Westminster. The hustings had been erected in Covent Garden, near the front of St. Paul's Church; and when I—a young man living in London—drew near to the spot, Mill was speaking. The appearance of the author of the treatise *On Liberty* (which we

students of that date knew almost by heart) was so different from the look of persons who usually address crowds in the open air that it held the attention of people for whom such a gathering in itself had little interest. Yet it was, primarily, that of a man out of place. The religious sincerity of his speech was jarred on by his environment—a group on the hustings who, with few exceptions, did not care to understand him fully, and a crowd below who could not. He stood bareheaded, and his vast pale brow, so thin-skinned as to show the blue veins, sloped back like a stretching upland, and conveyed to the observer a curious sense of perilous exposure. The picture of him as personified earnestness surrounded for the most part by careless curiosity derived an added piquancy—if it can be called such—from the fact that the cameo clearness of his face chanced to be in relief against the blue shadow of a church which, on its transcendental side, his doctrines antagonized. But it would not be right to say that the throng was absolutely unimpressed by his words; it felt that they were weighty, though it did not quite know why.

"Your obedient servant,

"THOMAS HARDY.

"HYDE PARK MANSIONS,
"*May* 20."

The same month Mrs. Hardy makes the following note: "May 30. Returned to Max Gate for a day or two. I gardened a little, and had the first strange fainting-fit [I had known]. My heart seemed to stop; I fell, and after a while a servant came to me." (Mrs. Hardy died of heart-failure six years after.)

During this summer in London M. Jacques Blanche, the well-known French painter, who had a studio in Knightsbridge, painted Hardy's portrait in oils. And a paper called "Memories of Church Restoration", which he had written, was read in his enforced absence by Colonel

Eustace Balfour at the annual meeting of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

At the end of the lecture great satisfaction was expressed by speakers that Hardy had laid special emphasis on the value of the human associations of ancient buildings, for instance, the pews of churches, since they were generally slighted in paying regard to artistic and architectural points only.

As the June month drew on Hardy seems to have been at the British Museum Library verifying some remaining details for *The Dynasts*, Part Third; also incidentally going to see the *Daily Telegraph* printed, and to meet a group of German editors on a visit to England. He returned with his wife to Dorset towards the latter part of July.

At the end of July he wrote to Pittsburgh, U.S.A.:

"The handsome invitation of the Trustees of the Pittsburgh Institute that I should attend the dedication with wife or daughter, free of expense to us from the time we leave home till we return again, is a highly honouring and tempting one. But I am compelled to think of many contingent matters that would stand in the way of my paying such a visit, and have concluded that I cannot undertake it.

"Please convey my thanks to Mr. Carnegie and the trustees."

"*August* 15. Have just read of the death of Mrs. Craigie in the papers. . . . Her description of the artistic temperament is clever; as being that which 'thinks more than there is to think, feels more than there is to feel, sees more than there is to see'. . . . It reveals a bitterness of heart that was not shown on the surface by that brilliant woman."

On August 17 he started with his brother on a tour to some English cathedrals, which included Lincoln, Ely,

the Cambridge Colleges, and Canterbury; and finished out the summer with bicycling in Dorset and Somerset. He must have been working at the third part of *The Dynasts* at intervals this year, though there is apparently no record of his doing so.

1907

The poem entitled "New Year's Eve", written in 1906, was issued in the January number of the *Fortnightly Review*, 1907 (afterwards reprinted in the volume called *Time's Laughingstocks*). Some time in the same month he made the following notes on kindred subjects:

"An ephemeral article which might be written: 'The Hard Case of the Would-be-Religious. By Sinceritas.'

"Synopsis. Many millions of the most thoughtful people in England are prevented entering any church or chapel from year's end to year's end.

"The days of creeds are as dead and done with as the days of Pterodactyls.

"Required: services at which there are no affirmations and no supplications.

"Rationalists err as far in one direction as Revelationists or Mystics in the other; as far in the direction of logicality as their opponents away from it.

"*Religious*, *religion*, is to be used in the article in its modern sense entirely, as being expressive of nobler feelings towards humanity and emotional goodness and greatness, the old meaning of the word—ceremony, or ritual —having perished, or nearly.

"We enter church, and we have to say, 'We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep', when what we want to say is, 'Why are we made to err and stray like lost sheep?' Then we have to sing, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord', when what we want to sing is, 'O that my soul could find some Lord that it could magnify! Till it can, let us magnify good works, and develop all means of

easing mortals' progress through a world not worthy of them.'

"Still, being present, we say the established words full of the historic sentiment only, mentally adding, 'How happy our ancestors were in repeating in all sincerity these articles of faith!' But we perceive that none of the congregation recognizes that we repeat the words from an antiquarian interest in them, and in a historic sense, and solely in order to keep a church of some sort afoot—a thing indispensable; so that we are pretending what is not true: that we are believers. This must not be; we must leave. And if we do, we reluctantly go to the door, and creep out as it creaks complainingly behind us."

Hardy, however, was not a controversialist in religion or anything else, and it should be added here that he sometimes took a more nebulous view, that may be called transmutative, as in a passage that he wrote some time later:

"Christianity nowadays as expounded by Christian apologists has an entirely different meaning from that which it bore when I was a boy. If I understand, it now limits itself to the religion of emotional morality and altruism that was taught by Jesus Christ, or nearly so limits itself. But this teaching does not appertain especially to Christianity: other moral religions within whose sphere the name of Christ has never been heard, teach the same thing! Perhaps this is a mere question of terminology, and does not much matter. That the dogmatic superstitions read every Sunday are merely a commemorative recitation of old articles of faith held by our grandfathers, may not much matter either, as long as this is well understood. Still, it would be more honest to make these points clearer, by recasting the liturgy, for their real meaning is often misapprehended. But there seems to be no sign of such a clearing up, and I fear that, since the 'Apology' [in *Late Lyrics*], in which I expressed as much some years ago, no

advance whatever has been shown; rather, indeed, a childish back-current towards a belief in magic rites."

"*February* 8. E. goes to London to walk in the suffragist procession to-morrow."

In March occurred the death of a friend—the Rev. T. Perkins, rector of Turnworth, Dorset—with whom Hardy was in sympathy for his humane and disinterested views, and staunch support of the principle of justice for animals, in whose cause he made noble sacrifices, and spent time and money that he could ill afford. On the 29th of the month Hardy enters a memorandum:

"Eve of Good Friday. 11.30 P.M. Finished draft of Part III. of *The Dynasts*." He had probably been so far influenced by the reception of the first two parts as not to expect the change of view which was about to give to the third part, and the whole production, a warm verdict of success, or he would not have followed the entry by the addendum:

"Critics can never be made to understand that the failure may be greater than the success. It is their particular duty to point this out; but the public points it out to them. To have strength to roll a stone weighing a hundredweight to the top of the mount is a success, and to have the strength to roll a stone of ten hundredweight only half-way up that mount is a failure. But the latter is two or three times as strong a deed."

They again took the flat in Hyde Park Mansions for the spring and summer, and moved thither the third week in April, whence they made their usual descent on friends and acquaintances, picture-galleries, and concert-rooms. It was this year that they met Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Shaw—it is believed for the first time. They also received at the flat their customary old friends, including Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Barrie, M. and Madame Jacques Blanche, and many others.

In May he was present at an informal but most interesting dinner at the house of his friend Dr. Hagberg Wright, where he met M. and Mme. Maxim Gorky, Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Richard Whiteing, and others. A disconcerting but amusing accident was the difficulty of finding Mr. Wright's flat, on account of which the guests arrived at intervals and had their dinners in succession, the Gorkys coming last after driving two hours about London, including the purlieus of Whitechapel, which he had mistaken for "Westminster". Naturally it was a late hour when the party broke up.

June 2. Hardy's birthday, which he kept by dining at Lady St. Helier's.

On the same day he wrote to Mr. Edward Wright:

"Your interesting letter on the philosophy of *The Dynasts* has reached me here. I will try to answer some of your inquiries.

"I quite agree with you in holding that the word 'Will' does not perfectly fit the idea to be conveyed—a vague thrusting or urging internal force in no predetermined direction. But it has become accepted in philosophy for want of a better, and is hardly likely to be supplanted by another, unless a highly appropriate one could be found, which I doubt. The word that you suggest—Impulse—seems to me to imply a driving power behind it; also a spasmodic movement unlike that of, say, the tendency of an ape to become a man and other such processes.

"In a dramatic epic—which I may perhaps assume *The Dynasts* to be—some philosophy of life was necessary, and I went on using that which I had denoted in my previous volumes of verse (and to some extent prose) as being a generalized form of what the thinking world had gradually come to adopt, myself included. That the Un-

conscious Will of the Universe is growing aware of Itself I believe I may claim as my own idea solely—at which I arrived by reflecting that what has already taken place in a fraction of the whole (*i.e.* so much of the world as has become conscious) is likely to take place in the mass; and there being no Will outside the mass—that is, the Universe—the whole Will becomes conscious thereby: and ultimately, it is to be hoped, sympathetic.

"I believe, too, that the Prime Cause, this Will, has never before been called 'It' in any poetical literature, English or foreign.

"This theory, too, seems to me to settle the question of Free-will v. Necessity. The will of a man is, according to it, neither wholly free nor wholly unfree. When swayed by the Universal Will (which he mostly must be as a subservient part of it) he is not individually free; but whenever it happens that all the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium the minute portion called one person's will is free, just as a performer's fingers are free to go on playing the pianoforte of themselves when he talks or thinks of something else and the head does not rule them.

"In the first edition of a drama of the extent of *The Dynasts* there may be, of course, accidental discrepancies and oversights which seem not quite to harmonize with these principles; but I hope they are not many.

"The third part will probably not be ready till the end of this or the beginning of next year; so that I have no proofs as yet. I do not think, however, that they would help you much in your proposed article. The first and second parts already published, and some of the poems in *Poems of the Past and the Present*, exhibit fairly enough the whole philosophy."

Concerning Hardy's remark in this letter on the Unconscious Will being an idea already current, though that its growing aware of Itself might be newer, and that there might be discrepancies in the Spirits' philosophy, it may

be stated that he had felt such questions of priority and discrepancy to be immaterial where the work was offered as a poem and not as a system of thought.

On the 22nd of June they were guests at King Edward's Garden Party at Windsor Castle, and a few days later at Mr. Reginald Smith's met Sir Theodore Martin, then nearly ninety-one, Hardy remembering when as a young man he had frequented the pit of Drury Lane to see Lady Martin —then Miss Helen Faucit—in Shakespeare characters. His term at Hyde Park Mansions came to an end in the latter part of July, and they returned to Max Gate, though Hardy attended a dinner a week later given by the Medico-Psychological Society, where he had scientific discussions with Sir James Crichton-Browne and Sir Clifford Allbutt, and where one of the speakers interested Hardy by saying that all great things were done by men "who were not at ease".

That autumn Sir Frederick and Lady Treves took a house near Max Gate, and Hardy frequently discussed with the Serjeant-surgeon a question which had drawn their attention for a long time, both being Dorset men; that of the "poor whites" in Barbados, a degenerate, decadent race, descendants of the Dorset and Somerset "rebels" who were banished there by Judge Jeffreys, and one of whom had been a collateral ancestor of Hardy's on the maternal side.

He was now reaching a time of life when shadows were continually falling. His friend Pretor, Fellow of St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, wrote to tell him he was dying, and asked him for an epitaph. Hardy thought of an old one:

> If a madness 'tis to weepe
> For a man that's fall'n asleepe,
> How much more for that we call
> Death—the sweetest sleepe of all!

They still kept up a little bicycling this autumn, but he did some writing, finishing the third part of *The Dynasts* in September, and posting the MS. to the publishers shortly after.

In November he complied with a request from the Dorsetshire Regiment in India, which had asked him for a marching tune with the required local affinity for the use of the fifes and drums, and sent out an old tune of his grandfather's called "The Dorchester Hornpipe", which he himself had fiddled at dances as a boy. He wound up the year by sending to the Wessex Society of Manchester, also at their request, a motto for the Society:

> While new tongues call, and novel scenes unfold,
> Meet may it be to bear in mind the old. . . .
> Vain dreams, indeed, are thoughts of heretofore;
> What then? Your instant lives are nothing more.

About the same time he forwarded "A Sunday Morning Tragedy" to the *English Review* as wished, where it appeared shortly after; and also in fulfilment of a promise, sent the following old-fashioned psalm tunes associated with Dorsetshire to the Society of Dorset Men in London, of which he was President-elect for the ensuing year:

Frome; Wareham; Blandford; New Poole; Bridport; Lulworth; Rockborne; Mercy; Bridehead; Charmouth.

The concluding part of *The Dynasts* was published about six weeks later and was the cause of his receiving many enthusiastic letters from friends and strangers, among which the following from the far west of Australia may be given as a specimen:

"My thanks for your tremendous new statement in *The Dynasts* of the world-old problem of Freewill versus Necessity. You have carried me on to the mountain with Jesus of Nazareth, and, viewing with Him the great conflict below, one chooses with Him to side with the Spirit of the Pities, in the belief that they will ultimately triumph; and

even if they do not we at least will do our little to add to the joy rather than to the woe of the world. . . . The Spirit of the Pities is indeed young in comparison with The Years, and so we must be patient. . . . Your conception of the Immanent Will—irresponsible, blind, but possibly growing into self-consciousness, was of great significance to me, from my knowledge of Dr. Bucke's theory of the Cosmic Consciousness."

In connection with this subject it may be here recalled, in answer to writers who now and later were fond of charging Hardy with postulating a malignant and fiendish God, that he never held any views of the sort, merely surmising an indifferent and unconscious force at the back of things "that neither good nor evil knows". His view is shown, in fact, to approximate to Spinoza's—and later Einstein's—that neither Chance nor Purpose governs the universe, but Necessity.

END OF PART II

PART III

"TIME'S LAUGHINGSTOCKS", "SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE", AND "MOMENTS OF VISION"

CHAPTER X

DEATHS OF SWINBURNE AND MEREDITH

1908–1909: *Aet.* 67–69

In March he finished preparing a book of selections from the poems of William Barnes, for the Clarendon Press, Oxford, with a critical preface and glossary.

In April Lady St. Helier and a party motored from beyond Newbury to Max Gate and back, arriving within five minutes of the time specified, although the distance each way was seventy-five miles. It was considered a good performance in those days. At the end of the month he dined at the Royal Academy, but was in Dorchester at a performance by the local Dramatic Society of some scenes from *The Dynasts*—the first attempt to put on the stage a dramatic epic that was not intended for staging at all. In May he sent his Presidential Address to the Society of Dorset Men in London, to be read by the Secretary, as he was always a victim to influenza and throat-trouble if he read or spoke in London himself; afterwards on request he sent the original manuscript. (By the way, the address never was read, so he might have saved himself the trouble of writing it. What became of the manuscript is unknown.)

The following letter to Mr. Robert Donald in May explains itself:

"If I felt at all strongly, or indeed weakly, on the desirability of a memorial to Shakespeare in the shape of a theatre, I would join the Committee. But I do not think that Shakespeare appertains particularly to the theatrical

world nowadays, if ever he did. His distinction as a minister to the theatre is infinitesimal beside his distinction as a poet, man of letters, and seer of life, and that his expression of himself was cast in the form of words for actors and not in the form of books to be read was an accident of his social circumstances that he himself despised. I would, besides, hazard the guess that he, of all poets of high rank whose works have taken a stage direction, will some day cease altogether to be acted, and be simply studied.

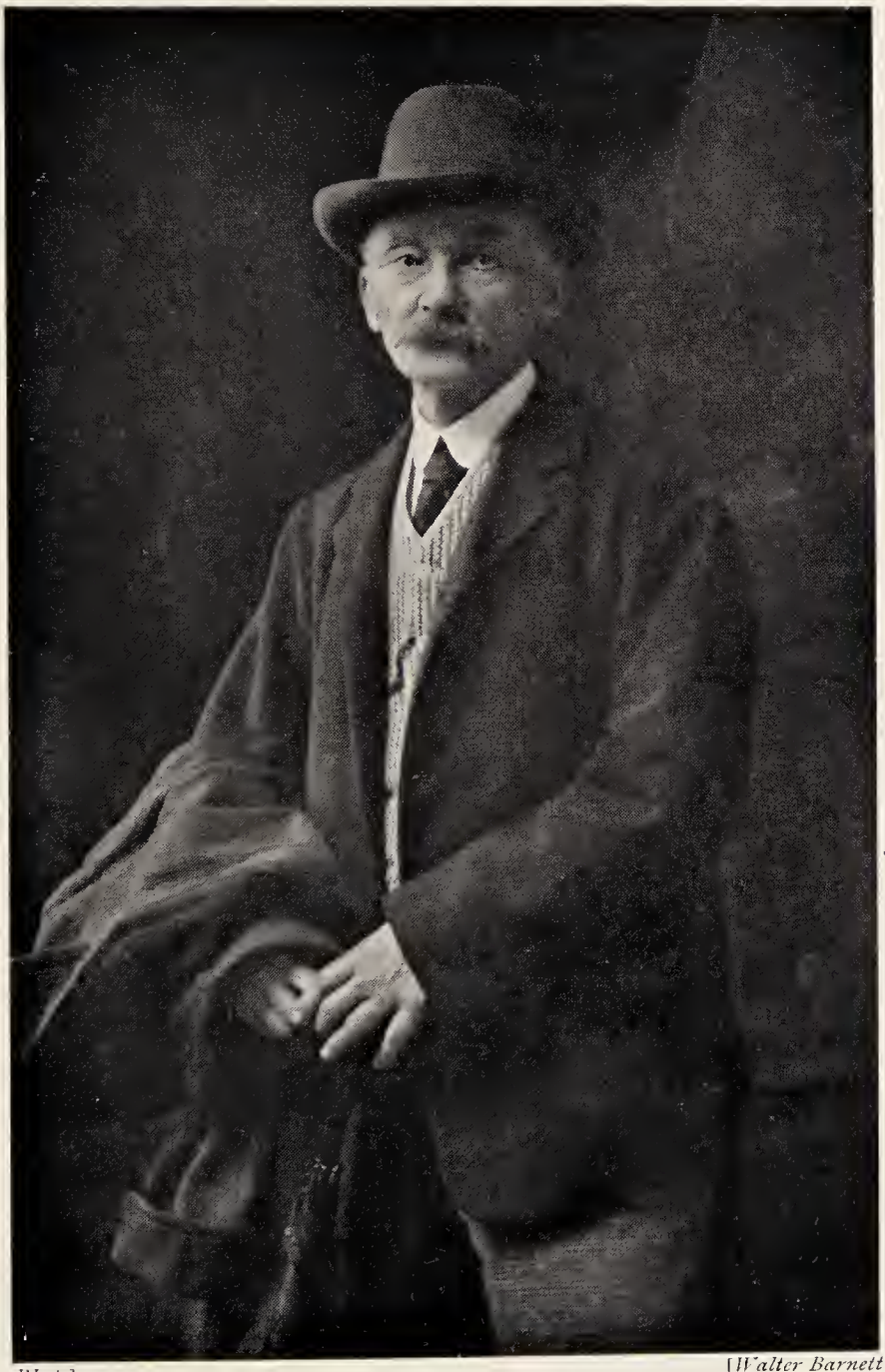
"I therefore do not see the good of a memorial theatre, or for that matter any other material monument to him, and prefer not to join the Committee.

"Nevertheless I sincerely thank you for letting me know how the movement is progressing, and for your appreciative thought that my joining the promoters would be an advantage."

Hardy afterwards modified the latter part of the above opinion in favour of a colossal statue in some public place.

It appears that the Hardys did not take any house or flat in London this year, contenting themselves with short visits and hotel quarters, so that there is not much to mention. From letters it can be gathered that at a dinner his historic sense was appealed to by the Duchess of St. Albans taking a diamond pin from her neck and telling him it had been worn by Nell Gwynne; and in May or June he paid a few days' visit to Lord Curzon at Hackwood Park, where many of the house-party went into the wood by moonlight to listen to the nightingale, but made such a babble of conversation that no nightingale ventured to open his bill.

In July Hardy was again in London with Mrs. Hardy, and was present at the unveiling by Lord Curzon of the memorial to "John Oliver Hobbes" (Mrs. Craigie), at University College, where he had the pleasure of hearing his writings cried down by a speaker, nobody knowing



Photo] [*Walter Barnett*

THOMAS HARDY

c. 1908

him to be present. During some of these days he sat to Sir Hubert Herkomer for his portrait, kindly presented to him by the painter. He went on to Cambridge to the Milton Celebration, where at the house of his friend Sir Clifford Allbutt he met Mr. Robert Bridges, the Poet-Laureate, for the first time, and made the acquaintance of Dr. Peile, the Master of Christ's College, Sir James ("Dictionary") Murray, and others. *Comus* was played at the theatre, in which performance young Rupert Brooke appeared as the attendant Spirit, but Hardy did not speak to him, to his after regret.

The remainder of the month was spent in Dorset, where he met for the last time his friend Bosworth Smith, long a house-master at Harrow, who told him he was soon to undergo a severe surgical operation—under which indeed he sank and died three months after. This was the fourth of his friends and relations that had sunk under the surgeon's knife in four years—leaving a blank that nothing could fill.

"*August* 18. The Poet takes note of nothing that he cannot feel emotively.

"If all hearts were open and all desires known—as they would be if people showed their souls—how many gapings, sighings, clenched fists, knotted brows, broad grins, and red eyes should we see in the market-place!"

The autumn was filled by little journeys to cathedrals and a visit to his sister at Swanage, whither she had gone for change of air; and in December he attended a dinner at the Mansion House to commemorate Milton, from which he returned in company with his friend Mr. S. H. Butcher, walking up and down with him late that night in Russell Square, conversing on many matters as if they knew they would never meet again. Hardy had a great liking for him, and was drawn to him for the added reason that he and his family had been warm friends of Hardy's dead friend Horace Moule.

In the following January (1909) the University of Virginia invited him to attend the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Edgar Allan Poe, and in writing his thanks for the invitation Hardy adds:

"The University of Virginia does well to commemorate the birthday of this poet. Now that lapse of time has reduced the insignificant and petty details of his life to their true proportion beside the measure of his poetry, and softened the horror of the correct classes at his lack of respectability, that fantastic and romantic genius shows himself in all his rarity. His qualities, which would have been extraordinary anywhere, are much more extraordinary for the America of his date.

"Why one who was in many ways disadvantageously circumstanced for the development of the art of poetry should have been the first to realize to the full the possibilities of the English language in rhyme and alliteration is not easily explicable.

"It is a matter for curious conjecture whether his achievements in verse would have been the same if the five years of childhood spent in England had been extended to adult life. That 'unmerciful disaster' hindered those achievements from being carried further must be an endless regret to lovers of poetry."

At the beginning of this year Hardy was appointed by the Dorset Court of Quarter Sessions a Representative Governor of the Dorchester Grammar School, a position he filled till the end of 1925. He said he was not practical enough to make a good governor, but was influenced to accept the office by the fact that his namesake, Thomas Hardy of Melcombe Regis, who died in 1599, was the founder of the school. The latter has a monument in St. Peter's Church, Dorchester,[1] and is believed to have been of the same stock as the Thomas Hardy of this memoir.

[1] See *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*, p. 6.

In March came the last letter he was ever to receive from George Meredith, in which the elder writes:

"The French review herewith comes to my address and is, as you see by the superscription, intended for you.

"I am reminded that you are among the kind souls who thought of me on my 80th [birthday] and have not been thanked for their testimony of it. . . . The book [*The Dynasts*] was welcome all the more as being a sign that this big work was off your mind. How it may have been received I cannot say, but any book on so large a scale has to suffer the fate of a Panorama, and must be visited again and again for a just impression of it to be taken. I saw that somewhere in your neighbourhood it was represented in action. That is the way to bring it more rapidly home to the mind. But the speaker of Josephine's last words would have to be a choice one."

The representation had been in Dorchester, and was limited to a few of the country scenes.

On the 10th April he heard of the death of Swinburne, which was the occasion of his writing the following letter:

"MAX GATE, *April* 12, 1909.

"For several reasons I could not bring myself to write on Swinburne immediately I heard that, to use his own words, 'Fate had undone the bondage of the gods' for him. . . .

"No doubt the press will say some good words about him now he is dead and does not care whether it says them or no. Well, I remember what it said in 1866, when he did care, though you do not remember it, and how it made the blood of some of us young men boil.

"Was there ever such a country—looking back at the life, work, and death of Swinburne—is there any other country in Europe whose attitude towards a deceased poet of his rank would have been so ignoring and almost contemptuous? I except *The Times*, which has the fairest

estimate I have yet seen. But read the *Academy* and the *Nation*.

"The kindly cowardice of many papers is overwhelming him with such toleration, such theological judgements, hypocritical sympathy, and misdirected eulogy that, to use his own words again, 'it makes one sick in a corner'—or as we say down here in Wessex, 'it is enough to make every little dog run to mixen'.

"However, we are getting on in our appreciativeness of poets. One thinks of those other two lyricists, Burns and Shelley, at this time, for obvious reasons, and of how much harder it was with them. We know how Burns was treated at Dumfries, but by the time that Swinburne was a young man Burns had advanced so far as to be regarded as no worse than 'the glory and the shame of literature' (in the words of a critic of that date). As for Shelley, he was not tolerated at all in his lifetime. But Swinburne has been tolerated—at any rate since he has not written anything to speak of. And a few months ago, when old and enfeebled, he was honoured by a rumour that he had been offered a complimentary degree at Oxford. And Shelley too, in these latter days of our memory, has been favoured so far as to be considered no lower than an ineffectual angel beating his luminous wings in vain. . . .

"I was so late in getting my poetical barge under way, and he was so early with his flotilla—besides my being between three and four years younger, and being nominally an architect (an awful impostor at that, really)—that though I read him as he came out I did not personally know him till many years after the *Poems and Ballads* year. . . .

. . . . . .

"T. H."

"*April* 13. A genius for repartee is a gift for saying what a wise man thinks only."

"*April* 15. Day of Swinburne's funeral. Find I can-

not go with this rheumatism, though it is but slight, the journey being so roundabout.

"Thought of some of Swinburne's lines: *e.g.*,

"On Shelley: 'O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were'.

"On Newman and Carlyle: 'With all our hearts we praise you whom ye hate'.

"On Time: 'For time is as wind and as waves are we'.

"On Man: 'Save his own soul he hath no star'."[1]

In May Hardy was in London, and walking along Dover Street on his way to the Academy saw on a poster the announcement of the death of Meredith. He went on to the Athenæum and wrote some memorial lines on his friend, which were published a day or two later in *The Times*, and reprinted in *Time's Laughingstocks*.

On the 22nd he attended a memorial service to Meredith in Westminster Abbey—meeting there Maurice Hewlett, Henry James, Max Beerbohm, Alfred Austin, and other acquaintance—and returned to Dorchester the same afternoon.

In June he was asked to succeed Meredith as President of the Society of Authors; and wrote to Mr. Maurice Hewlett, who had brought the proposal before him:

"I am moved more than I can say by learning that in the view of the Council I should be offered the succession to the Presidentship. But I must nevertheless perform the disagreeable duty of acting upon my own conviction of what is for the Society's good, and tell you that I feel compelled to decline the honour. I have long had an opinion that although in the early years of the Society it may perhaps have been not unwise to have at its head men who took no part in its management—indeed the mere names of Tennyson and Meredith were in themselves of

[1] But Isaiah had said before him: "Mine own arm brought salvation unto me".

use to the institution—the time has now come when the President should be one who takes an active part in the Council's deliberations, and if possible one who lives in or near London—briefly, that he should preside over its affairs. Now this I could never do. I will not go into the reasons why, as they are personal and unavoidable. . . .

"I may perhaps add that if there should still be a preponderating opinion in the Council that an inactive President of the old kind is still desirable, the eminent name of Lord Morley suggests itself."

However, the matter ended by the acceptance of the Presidency by Hardy on further representations by the Council. His first diffidence had, in fact, arisen, as he stated, out of consideration for the Society's interests, for he remembered that the Society included people of all sorts of views, and that since Swinburne's death there was no living English writer who had been so abused by sections of the press as he himself had been in previous years; "and who knows", he would drily add, "that I may not be again?"

But, as said above, his objections were overruled.

As usual his stay in London had given him influenza, and he could not go to Aldeburgh as he had intended. About this time he wrote to a lady of New York in answer to an inquiry she made:

"The discovery of the law of evolution, which revealed that all organic creatures are of one family, shifted the centre of altruism from humanity to the whole conscious world collectively. Therefore the practice of vivisection, which might have been defended while the belief ruled that men and animals are essentially different, has been left by that discovery without any logical argument in its favour. And if the practice, to the extent merely of inflicting slight discomfort now and then, be defended [as I sometimes hold it may] on grounds of it being good policy for animals as well as men, it is nevertheless in strictness a wrong, and

stands precisely in the same category as would stand its practice on men themselves."

In July the influenza had nearly passed off, and he fulfilled his engagement to go to Aldeburgh—the air of which he always sought if possible after that malady, having found it a quicker restorative than that of any other place he knew.

In the second week of this month he was at rehearsals of Baron F. d'Erlanger's opera *Tess* at Covent Garden, and on the 14th was present with Mrs. Hardy at the first performance. Though Italianized to such an extent that Hardy scarcely recognized it as his novel, it was a great success in a crowded house, Queen Alexandra being among the distinguished audience. Destinn's voice suited the title-character admirably; her appearance less so.

In response to an invitation by Dr. Max Dessoir, a professor at the University of Berlin, who wished to have an epitome of the culture and thought of the time—the "Weltanschauung" of a few representative men in England and Germany—Hardy wrote the following during August this year:

"We call our age an age of Freedom. Yet Freedom, under her incubus of armaments, territorial ambitions smugly disguised as patriotism, superstitions, conventions of every sort, is of such stunted proportions in this her so-called time, that the human race is likely to be extinct before Freedom arrives at maturity."

In the meantime he had been putting together poems written between-whiles, some of them already printed in periodicals—and in addition hunting up quite old ones dating from 1865, and overlooked in his earlier volumes, out of which he made a volume called *Time's Laughingstocks*, and sent off the MS. to his publishers the first week in September.

In continuance of the visits to cathedrals he went this autumn to Chichester, York, Edinburgh, and Durham;

and on returning to Dorchester was at a rehearsal of a play by Mr. A. H. Evans, the dramatist of the local Debating and Dramatic Society, based on *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which was performed there in the Corn Exchange, and a few days later before the Society of Dorset Men in London. Hardy had nothing to do with the adaptation, but thought it a neater achievement than the London version of 1882 by Mr. Comyns Carr.

In December *Time's Laughingstocks* was published, and Hardy was in London, coming back as usual with a choking sore throat which confined him to his bed till the New Year, on the eve of which at twelve o'clock he crouched by the fire and heard in the silence of the night the ringing of the muffled peal down the chimney of his bedroom from the neighbouring church of St. George.

CHAPTER XI

THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

1910: *Aet.* 69–70

In March, being at Ventnor, Hardy visited Swinburne's grave at Bonchurch, and composed the poem entitled "A Singer Asleep". It is remembered by a friend who accompanied him on this expedition how that windy March day had a poetry of its own, how primroses clustered in the hedges, and noisy rooks wheeled in the air over the little churchyard. Hardy gathered a spray of ivy and laid it on the grave of that brother-poet of whom he never spoke save in words of admiration and affection.

"*To the Secretary of the Humanitarian League.*

"The Athenæum, Pall Mall, S.W.,
"10*th April* 1910.

"Sir:

"I am glad to think that the Humanitarian League has attained the handsome age of twenty years—the Animals Defence Department particularly.

"Few people seem to perceive fully as yet that the most far-reaching consequence of the establishment of the common origin of all species is ethical; that it logically involved a readjustment of altruistic morals by enlarging as a *necessity of rightness* the application of what has been called 'The Golden Rule' beyond the area of mere mankind to that of the whole animal kingdom. Possibly Darwin himself did not wholly perceive it, though he alluded to it.

While man was deemed to be a creation apart from all other creations, a secondary or tertiary morality was considered good enough towards the 'inferior' races; but no person who reasons nowadays can escape the trying conclusion that this is not maintainable. And though I myself do not at present see how the principle of equal justice all round is to be carried out in its entirety, I recognize that the League is grappling with the question."

It will be seen that in substance this agrees with a letter written earlier, and no doubt the subject was much in his mind just now.

About this time Hardy was asked by the editor of *Harper's Magazine* to publish his reminiscences in the pages of that periodical month by month. He replied:

"I could not appear in a better place. But it is absolutely unlikely that I shall ever change my present intention not to produce my reminiscences to the world."

In this same month of April he was looking for a flat again in London, and found one at Blomfield Court, Maida Vale, which he and his wife and servants entered in May. Looking out of the window while at breakfast on the morning after their arrival, they beheld placarded in the street an announcement of the death of King Edward.

Hardy saw from the Athenæum the procession of the removal of the King's body to Westminster, and the procession of the funeral from Westminster three days later. On account of the suggestiveness of such events it must have been in these days that he wrote "A King's Soliloquy on the Night of his Funeral". His own seventieth birthday a fortnight later reminded him that he was a year older than the monarch who had just died.

There was general satisfaction when Hardy's name appeared as a recipient of the Order of Merit in the Birthday List of Honours in June 1910. He received numerous and gratifying telegrams and letters of congratulation from

both friends and strangers, and, though he accepted the award with characteristic quietude, it was evident that this sign of official approval of his work brought him pleasure.

At the flat—the last one they were to take, as it happened—they received their usual friends as in previous years, and there were more performances of the *Tess* opera; but in the middle of June they were compelled to cancel all engagements suddenly owing to Hardy's illness, which was happily but brief. In July he was able to go out again, and on the 19th went to Marlborough House to be invested with the Order of Merit. The King received him pleasantly: "but afterwards I felt that I had failed in the accustomed formalities".

Back in the country at the end of the month they entertained some visitors at Max Gate. A brief visit to Aldeburgh, where he met Professor Bury and Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Frazer, and a few cycle rides, diversified the close of this summer.

In September he sat to Mr. William Strang for a sketch-portrait, which was required for hanging at Windsor Castle among those of other recipients of the Order of Merit; and on November 16 came the interesting occasion of the presentation of the freedom of Dorchester to Hardy, which appealed to his sentiment more perhaps than did many of those recognitions of his literary achievements that had come from the uttermost parts of the earth at a much earlier time. Among the very few speeches or lectures that he ever delivered, the one he made on this occasion was perhaps the most felicitous and personal:

"Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen of the Corporation—This is an occasion that speaks for itself, and so, happily, does not demand many remarks from me. In simply expressing my sincere thanks for the high compliment paid me by having my name enrolled with those of the Honorary Freemen of this historic town, I may be allowed to confess that the freedom of the Borough of Dorchester did

seem to me at first something that I had possessed a long while, had helped myself to (to speak plainly), for when I consider the liberties I have taken with its ancient walls, streets, and precincts through the medium of the printing-press, I feel that I have treated its external features with the hand of freedom indeed. True, it might be urged that my Casterbridge (if I may mention seriously a name coined off-hand in a moment with no thought of its becoming established and localized) is not Dorchester—not even the Dorchester as it existed sixty years ago, but a dream-place that never was outside an irresponsible book. Nevertheless, when somebody said to me that 'Casterbridge' is a sort of essence of the town as it used to be, 'a place more Dorchester than Dorchester itself', I could not absolutely contradict him, though I could not quite perceive it. At any rate, it is not a photograph in words, that inartistic species of literary produce, particularly in respect of personages. But let me say no more about my own doings. The chronicle of the town has vivid marks on it. Not to go back to events of national importance, lurid scenes have been enacted here within living memory, or not so many years beyond it, whippings in front of the town-pump, hangings on the gaol-roof. I myself saw a woman hanged not 100 yards from where we now stand, and I saw, too, a man in the stocks in the back part of this very building. Then, if one were to recount the election excitements, Free Trade riots, scenes of soldiers marching down the town to war, the proclamation of Sovereigns now crumbled to dust, it would be an interesting local story.

"Miss Burney, in her diary, speaks of its aspect when she drove through with the rest of King George's Court on her way to Weymouth. She says: 'The houses have the most ancient appearance of any that are inhabited that I have happened to see.' This is not quite the case now, and though we may regret the disappearance of these old buildings, I cannot be blind to the difficulty of keeping a

town in what may be called working order while retaining all its ancient features. Yet it must not be forgotten that these are its chief attractions for visitors, particularly American visitors. Old houses, in short, have a far larger commercial value than their owners always remember, and it is only when they have been destroyed, and tourists who have come to see them vow in their disappointment that they will never visit the spot again, that this is realized. An American gentleman came to me the other day in quite a bad temper, saying that he had diverged from his direct route from London to Liverpool to see ancient Dorchester, only to discover that he knew a hundred towns in the United States more ancient-looking than this (*laughter*). Well, we may be older than we look, like some ladies; but if, for instance, the original All-Saints and Trinity Churches, with their square towers, the castle, the fine mansion of the Trenchards at the corner of Shirehall Lane, the old Three Mariners Inn, the old Greyhound, the old Antelope, Lady Abingdon's house at the corner of Durngate Street, and other mediaeval buildings were still in their places, more visitors of antiquarian tastes would probably haunt the town than haunt it now. Old All-Saints was, I believe, demolished because its buttresses projected too far into the pavement. What a reason for destroying a record of 500 years in stone! I knew the architect who did it; a milder-mannered man never scuttled a sacred edifice. Milton's well-known observation in his *Areopagitica*—'Almost as well kill a man as kill a good book'—applies not a little to a good old building; which is not only a book but a unique manuscript that has no fellow. But corporations as such cannot help these removals; they can only be prevented by the education of their owners or temporary trustees, or, in the case of churches, by Government guardianship.

"And when all has been said on the desirability of preserving as much as can be preserved, our power to pre-

serve is largely an illusion. Where is the Dorchester of my early recollection—I mean the human Dorchester—the kernel—of which the houses were but the shell? Of the shops as I first recall them not a single owner remains; only in two or three instances does even the name remain. As a German author has said, 'Nothing is permanent but change'. Here in Dorchester, as elsewhere, I see the streets and the turnings not far different from those of my schoolboy time; but the faces that used to be seen at the doors, the inhabitants, where are they? I turn up the Weymouth Road, cross the railway-bridge, enter an iron gate to 'a slope of green access', and there they are! There is the Dorchester that I knew best; there are names on white stones one after the other, names that recall the voices, cheerful and sad, anxious and indifferent, that are missing from the dwellings and pavements. Those who are old enough to have had that experience may feel that after all the permanence or otherwise of inanimate Dorchester concerns but the permanence of what is minor and accessory.

"As to the future of the town, my impression is that its tendency is to become more and more a residential spot, and that the nature of its business will be mainly that of administering to the wants of 'private residents' as they are called. There are several reasons for supposing this. The dryness of its atmosphere and subsoil is unexcelled. It has the great advantage of standing near the coast without being on it, thus escaping the objections some people make to a winter residence close to the sea; while the marine tincture in its breezes tempers the keenness which is felt in those of high and dry chalk slopes further inland. Dorchester's future will not be like its past; we may be sure of that. Like all other provincial towns, it will lose its individuality—has lost much of it already. We have become almost a London suburb owing to the quickened locomotion, and, though some of us may regret this, it has to be.

"I will detain you no longer from Mr. Evans's comedy that is about to be played downstairs. Ruskin somewhere says that comedy is tragedy if you only look deep enough. Well, that is a thought to remember; but to-night, at any rate, we will all be young and not look too deeply."

After the presentation—which was witnessed by Mrs. Hardy, by Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Newbolt, by the writer of this memoir, and by other friends, the Dorchester Dramatic Society gave for the first time, at the hands of their own dramatist, an adaptation of *Under the Greenwood Tree* entitled *The Mellstock Quire*—the second title of the novel—Hardy himself doing no more than supply the original carols formerly sung by the Quire of the parish outshadowed by the name "Mellstock"—the village of Stinsford, a mile from the town.

In December the American fleet paid a visit to Portland Roads, and though the weather was bad while they were lying there Hardy went on board the battleship *Connecticut*, where he met the captain, commander, and others; who, with several more officers, afterwards visited him and Mrs. Hardy at Max Gate. On the 29th they went on board the English *Dreadnought*, which was also lying there, and thence to a dance on board the United States flagship *Louisiana*, to which they were welcomed by Admiral Vreeland.

It was at the end of this year that Hardy published in the *Fortnightly Review* some verses entitled "God's Funeral". The alternative title he had submitted for the poem was "The Funeral of Jahveh"—the subject being the gradual decline and extinction in the human race of a belief in an anthropomorphic god of the King of Dahomey type—a fact recognised by all bodies of theologians for many years. But the editor, thinking the longer title clumsy and obscure, chose the other, to which Hardy made no objection, supposing the meaning of his poem would be clear enough to readers.

CHAPTER XII

BEREAVEMENT

1911–1912: *Aet.* 70–72

In March (1911) Hardy received a letter from M. Emile Bergerat of Paris asking him to let his name appear as one of the Committee for honouring Théophile Gautier on his approaching centenary, to which Hardy readily agreed. In the same month he visited Bristol Cathedral and Bath Abbey, and in April attended the funeral of the Mayor of Dorchester, who had presented him with the freedom of the borough but a few months earlier. A sequence of verses by Hardy, entitled "Satires of Circumstance", which were published in the *Fortnightly Review* at this juncture, met with much attention both here and in America.

In April he and his brother, in pursuance of a plan of seeing or re-seeing all the English cathedrals, visited Lichfield, Worcester, and Hereford.

He makes only one note this spring: "View the matrices rather than the moulds".

Hardy had been compelled to decline in February an invitation from the Earl-Marshal to the Coronation in Westminster Abbey in the coming June. That month found him on a tour with his brother in the Lake Country, including Carlisle Cathedral and Castle, where the dungeons were another reminder to him of how "evil men out of the evil treasure of their hearts have brought forth evil things". However, the tour was agreeable enough despite the wet weather, and probably Hardy got more pleasure out of

Coronation Day by spending it on Windermere than he would have done by spending it in a seat at the Abbey.

Of Grasmere Churchyard he says: "Wordsworth's headstone and grave are looking very trim and new. A group of tourists who have never read a line of him sit near, addressing and sending off picture postcards. . . . Wrote some verses." He visited Chester Cathedral coming homeward, called at Rugby, and went over the school and chapel; and returned to Dorchester through London.

After his return he signed, with many other well-known people, a protest against the use of aerial vessels in war; appealing to all governments "to foster by any means in their power an international understanding which shall preserve the world from warfare in the air". A futile protest indeed!

In July Hardy took his sister Katherine on an excursion to North Somerset, stopping at Minehead, and going on by coach to Porlock and Lynmouth. Thence they went by steamer to Ilfracombe, intending to proceed through Exeter to South Devon. But the heat was so great that further travelling was abandoned, and after going over the cathedral they returned home.

In the preceding month, it may be remarked, had died Mr. W. J. Last, A.M.Inst.C.E., Director of the Science Museum, South Kensington, who was a son of Hardy's old Dorchester schoolmaster, Isaac Glandfield Last. The obituary notices that appeared in *The Times* and other papers gave details of a life more successful than his father's, though not of higher intellectual ability than that by which it had been Hardy's good fortune to profit.

At the end of the month Mr. Sydney Cockerell, director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, called, mainly to inquire about Hardy's old manuscripts, which was the occasion of his looking up those that he could find and handing them over to Mr. Cockerell to distribute as he thought fit among any museums that would care to possess

one, Hardy himself preferring to have no voice in the matter. In the course of October this was done by Mr. Cockerell, the MSS. of *The Dynasts* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* being accepted by the British Museum, of *Time's Laughingstocks* and *Jude the Obscure* by the Fitzwilliam, and of *Wessex Poems*, with illustrations by the author himself (the only volume he ever largely illustrated), by Birmingham. Others were distributed from time to time by Mr. Cockerell, to whom Hardy had sent all the MSS. for him to do what he liked with, having insisted that "it would not be becoming for a writer to send his own MSS. to a museum on his own judgement".

It may be mentioned in passing that in these months Mr. F. Saxelby of Birmingham, having been attracted to Hardy's works by finding in them a name which resembled his own, published "A Hardy Dictionary", containing the names of persons and places in the author's novels and poems. Hardy had offered no objection to its being issued, but accepted no responsibility for its accuracy.

In November the Dorchester Debating and Dramatic Society gave another performance of plays from the Wessex novels. This time the selection was the short one-act piece that Hardy had dramatized himself many years before, from the story called *The Three Strangers*, entitled *The Three Wayfarers*; and a rendering by Mr. A. H. Evans of the tale of *The Distracted Preacher*. The Hardys' friend, Mrs. Arthur Henniker, came all the way from London to see it, and went with his wife and himself.

The curator of the Dorset County Museum having expressed a wish for a MS. of Hardy's, he sent this month the holograph of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

Being interested at this time in the only Gothic style of architecture that can be called especially and exclusively English—the perpendicular style of the fifteenth century—Hardy made a journey to Gloucester to investigate its

origin in that cathedral, which he ascertained to be in the screen between the south aisle and the transept—a fact long known probably to other investigators, but only recently to him. He was so much impressed by the thought that the inventor's name, like the names of the authors of so many noble songs and ballads, was unknown, that on his return he composed a poem thereon, called "The Abbey Mason", which was published a little later in *Harper's Magazine*, and later still was included in a volume with other poems.

The illness of his elder sister Mary saddened the close of 1911; and it was during this year that his wife wrote the Reminiscences printed in the earlier pages of this book, as if she had premonitions that her end was not far off; though nobody else suspected it.

The year 1912, which was to advance and end in such gloom for Hardy, began serenely. In January he went to London for a day or two and witnessed the performance of *Oedipus* at Covent Garden. But in February he learnt of the death of his friend General Henniker, and in April occurred the disaster to the *Titanic* steamship, upon which he wrote the poem called "The Convergence of the Twain" in aid of the fund for the sufferers.

On the 22nd April Hardy was correcting proofs for a new edition of his works, the Wessex Edition, concerning which he wrote to a friend:

". . . I am now on to p. 140 of *The Woodlanders* (in *copy* I mean, not in proofs, of course). That is vol. vi. Some of the later ones will be shorter. I read ten hours yesterday—finishing the *proofs* of the *Native* (wh. I have thus got rid of). I got to like the character of Clym before I had done with him. I think he is the nicest of all my heroes, and *not a bit* like me. On taking up *The Woodlanders* and reading it after many years I think I like it, *as a story*, the best of all. Perhaps that is owing to the locality and scenery

of the action, a part I am very fond of. It seems a more quaint and fresh story than the *Native*, and the characters are very distinctly drawn. . . . Seven o'clock P.M. It has come on to rain a little: a blackbird is singing outside. I have read on to p. 185 of *The Woodlanders* since the early part of my letter."

The Hardys dined with a few friends in London this season, but did not take a house, putting up at a hotel with which Hardy had long been familiar, the "West Central" in Southampton Row.

On June 1 at Max Gate they had a pleasant week-end visit from Henry Newbolt and W. B. Yeats, who had been deputed by the Royal Society of Literature to present Hardy with the Society's gold medal on his seventy-second birthday. These two eminent men of letters were the only people entertained at Max Gate for the occasion; but everything was done as methodically as if there had been a large audience. Hardy says: "Newbolt wasted on the nearly empty room the best speech he ever made in his life, and Yeats wasted a very good one: mine in returning thanks was as usual a bad one, and the audience was quite properly limited".

In the middle of June he was in London at Lady St. Helier's, and went to the play of *Bunty pulls the Strings* with her. An amusing anticlimax to a story of the three-crow type occurred in connection with this or some other popular play of the date. It was currently reported and credited that Mr. Asquith had gone to see it eight times, and Mr. Balfour sixteen. Taking Miss Balfour in to dinner and discussing the play, Hardy told her of the report, and she informed him that her brother had been only once. How few the visits of Mr. Asquith were could not be ascertained. Possibly he had not gone at all.

Later on in the autumn a letter was addressed to him on a gross abuse which was said to have occurred—that of publishing details of a lately deceased man's life under

the guise of a novel, with assurances of truth scattered in the newspapers. In the course of his reply he said:

"What should certainly be protested against, in cases where there is no authorization, is the mixing of fact and fiction in unknown proportions. Infinite mischief would lie in that. If any statements in the dress of fiction are covertly hinted to be fact, all must be fact, and nothing else but fact, for obvious reasons. The power of getting lies believed about people through that channel after they are dead, by stirring in a few truths, is a horror to contemplate."

"*June.* Here is a sentence from the *Edinburgh Review* of a short time back which I might have written myself: 'The division [of poems] into separate groups [ballad, lyrical, narrative, &c.] is frequently a question of the preponderance, not of the exclusive possession, of certain aesthetic elements.' "

Meanwhile in July he had returned to Max Gate just in time to be at a garden party on July 16—the last his wife ever gave—which it would have much grieved him afterwards to have missed. The afternoon was sunny and the guests numerous on this final one of many occasions of such a gathering on the lawn there, and nobody foresaw the shadow that was so soon to fall on the house, Mrs. Hardy being then, apparently, in her customary health and vigour. In the following month, August, she was at Weymouth for the last time; and Hardy took her and her niece to see the performance of *Bunty* at the Pavilion Theatre. It was her last play.

However, she was noticed to be weaker later on in the autumn, though not ill, and complained of her heart at times. Strangely enough, she one day suddenly sat down to the piano and played a long series of her favourite old tunes, saying at the end she would never play any more. The poem called "The Last Performance" approximately describes this incident.

She went out up to the 22nd November, when, though it was a damp, dark afternoon, she motored to pay a visit six miles off. The next day she was distinctly unwell, and the day after that was her birthday, when she seemed depressed. On the 25th two ladies called; and though she consulted with her husband whether or not to go downstairs to see them, and he suggested that she should not in her weak state, she did go down. The strain obliged her to retire immediately they had left. She never went downstairs again.

The next day she agreed to see a doctor, who did not think her seriously ill, but weak from want of nourishment through indigestion. In the evening she assented quite willingly to Hardy's suggestion that he should go to a rehearsal in Dorchester of a play made by the local company, that he had promised to attend. When he got back at eleven o'clock all the house was in bed and he did not disturb her.

The next morning the maid told him in answer to his inquiry that when she had as usual entered Mrs. Hardy's room a little earlier she had said she was better, and would probably get up later on; but that she now seemed worse. Hastening to her he was shocked to find her much worse, lying with her eyes closed and unconscious. The doctor came quite quickly, but before he arrived her breathing softened and ceased.

It was the day fixed for the performance of *The Trumpet-Major* in Dorchester, and it being found impossible to put off the play at such short notice, so many people having come from a distance for it, it was produced, an announcement of Mrs. Hardy's unexpected death being made from the stage.

Many years earlier she had fancied that she would like to be buried at Plymouth, her native place; but on going there to the funeral of her father she found that during a

"restoration" the family vault in Charles Churchyard, though it was not full, had been broken into, if not removed altogether, either to alter the entrance to the church, or to erect steps; and on coming back she told her husband that this had quite destroyed her wish to be taken there, since she could not lie near her parents.

There was one nook, indeed, which in some respects was pre-eminently the place where she might have lain—the graveyard of St. Juliot, Cornwall—whose dilapidated old church had been the cause of their meeting, and in whose precincts the early scenes of their romance had a brief being. But circumstances ordered otherwise. Hardy did not favour the thought of her being carried to that lonely coast unless he could be carried thither likewise in due time; and on this point all was uncertain. The funeral was accordingly at Stinsford, a mile from Dorchester and Max Gate, where the Hardys had buried for many years.

She had not mentioned to her husband, or to anybody else so far as he could discover, that she had any anticipations of death before it occurred so suddenly. Yet on his discovery of the manuscript of her "Recollections", written only a year earlier, it seemed as if some kind of presentiment must have crossed her mind that she was not to be much longer in the world, and that if her brief memories were to be written it were best to write them quickly. This is, however, but conjecture.

CHAPTER XIII

REVISITINGS, SECOND MARRIAGE, AND WAR WRITINGS

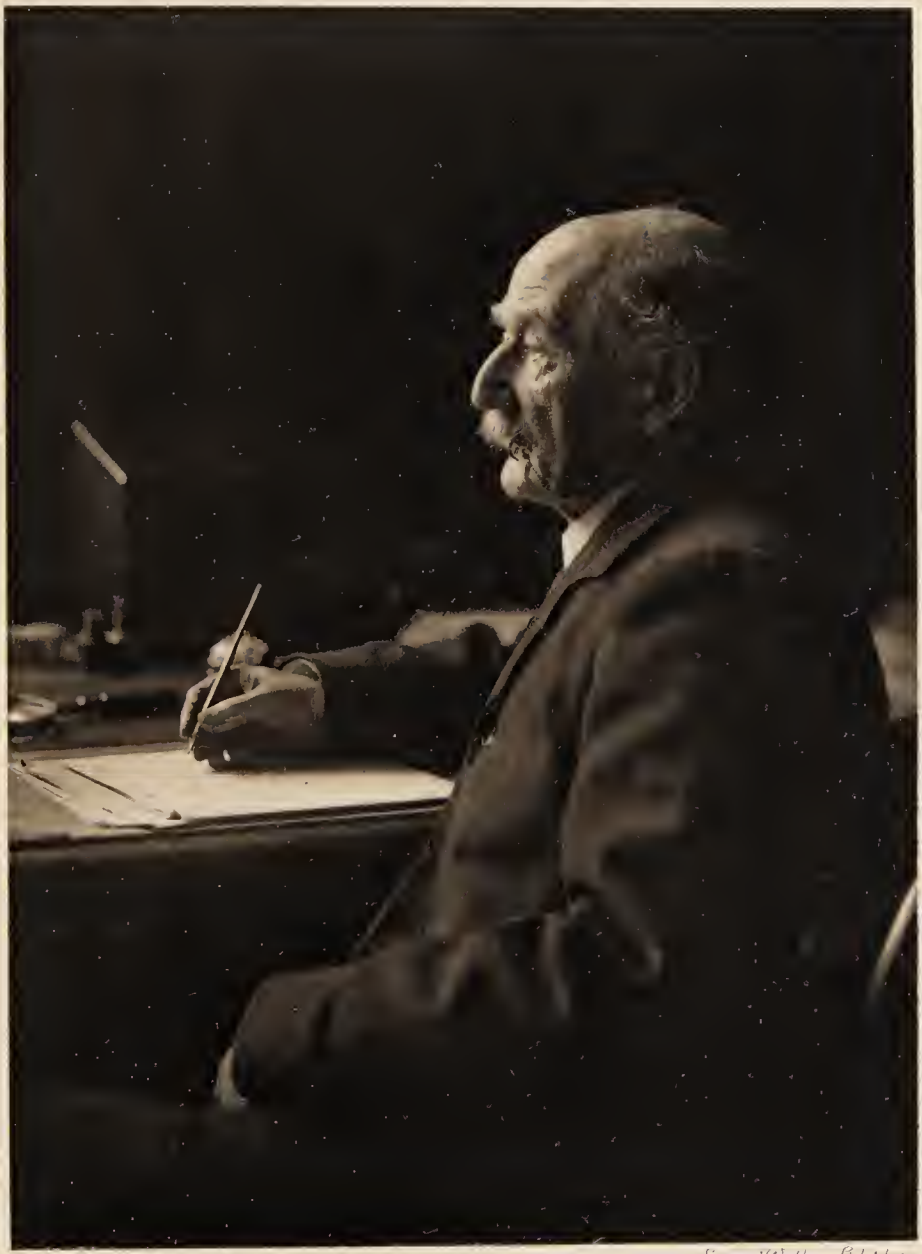
1913–1914: *Aet.* 72–74

MANY poems were written by Hardy at the end of the previous year and the early part of this—more than he had ever written before in the same space of time—as can be seen by referring to their subjects, as well as to the dates attached to them. To adopt Walpole's words concerning Gray, Hardy was "in flower" in these days, and, like Gray's, his flower was sad-coloured.

On March 6—almost to a day, forty-three years after his first journey to Cornwall—he started for St. Juliot, putting up at Boscastle, and visiting Pentargan Bay and Beeny Cliff, on which he had not once set foot in the long interval.

He found the rectory and other scenes with which he had been so familiar changed a little, but not greatly, and returning by way of Plymouth arranged for a memorial tablet to Mrs. Hardy in the church with which she had been so closely associated as organist before her marriage, and in other ways. The tablet was afterwards erected to his own design, as was also the tomb in Stinsford Churchyard—in the preparation of which memorials he had to revive a species of work that he had been unaccustomed to since the years of his architectural pupilage.

In June he left for Cambridge to receive the honorary degree of Litt.D., and lunched with the Master of Magdalene (also Vice-Chancellor), Dr. Donaldson, and Lady



Mme Edis photographer

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Thomas Hardy

1913

Albinia Donaldson, meeting—some for the first and last time—the Master of Trinity and Mrs. Butler, John Sargent, Arthur Benson, Henry Jackson, Vice-Master of Trinity and the Regius Professor of Greek, Sir James Murray, and many others. The visit was full of interest for Hardy as the sequel to his long indirect connection with the University in several ways, partly through the many graduates who were his friends, his frequent visits to the place, and his intention in the eighteen-sixties to go up himself for a pass-degree, which was abandoned mainly owing to his discovery that he could not conscientiously carry out his idea of taking Orders. A few weeks later he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Magdalene, as will be seen.

In July he was in London once or twice, meeting Dr. Page, the American Ambassador, Mr. and Mrs. Asquith, and others here and there. A German translation of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* under the title of *Der Bürgermeister* was begun as a serial in Germany at this time, and in the same month the gift of the MS. of his poem on Swinburne's death was acknowledged by the Newnes Librarian at Putney, an offer which had originated with Mr. Sydney Cockerell. In response to a request from the Secretary of the General Blind Association, he gave his permission to put some of his books in prose and verse into Braille type for the use of the blind, adding:

"I cannot very well suggest which, as I do not know the length you require. . . . If a full-length novel, I would suggest *The Trumpet-Major*. If verse, the Battle of Trafalgar scenes or the Battle of Waterloo scenes from *The Dynasts*, or a selection from the Poems. . . . I am assuming that you require scenes of action rather than those of reflection or analysis."

In August he was at Blandford with Mr. John Lane searching about for facts and scenes that might illustrate the life of Alfred Stevens, the sculptor, whose best-known work

is the Wellington monument in St. Paul's, and who was born and grew up in this town. Hardy had suggested that it ought to be written before it was too late, and Mr. Lane had taken up the idea. The house of his birth was discovered, but not much material seems to have been gained. It was not till a year or two later that Hardy discovered that Stevens's father painted the Ten Commandments in the church of Blandford St. Mary, his name being in the corner: "G. Stevens, Blandford, 1825".

"*September* 15. Thoughts on the recent school of novel-writers. They forget in their insistence on life, and nothing but life, in a plain slice, that a story *must be worth the telling*, that a good deal of life is not worth any such thing, and that they must not occupy a reader's time with what he can get at first hand anywhere around him."

The autumn glided on with its trifling incidents. In the muddle of Hardy's unmistressed housekeeping animal pets of his late wife died, strayed, or were killed, much to Hardy's regret; short visits were paid by friends, including Mr. Frederic Harrison; and in November, while staying with the Master of his College, Hardy was admitted in chapel as Honorary Fellow. "The ceremony, which consists of a Latin formula of admission before the Altar, and the handing-in of the new Fellow into his stall, was not unimpressive", said the *Cambridge Review*. Hardy had read the lessons in Church in his young manhood, besides having had much to do with churches in other ways, and the experience may have recalled the old ecclesiastical times. In the evening he dined in Hall, where "the Master proposed the health of him who was no longer a guest, but one of the Society, and the day's proceedings terminated happily", continued the *Cambridge Review*. It was an agreeable evening for Hardy, Mr. A. E. Housman and Sir Clifford Allbutt being present as guests among others of his friends.

A good sketch-painting of him was made this autumn

by Mr. Fuller Maitland for his friend Arthur Benson, to be hung with the other portraits in the hall of Magdalene College; and in the middle of November the Dorchester amateurs' version of *The Woodlanders*, adapted by themselves, was performed on the Dorchester stage, but Hardy was not present on the occasion.

In the December of this year M. Anatole France was entertained at a dinner in London by a committee of men of letters and of affairs. Hardy was much disappointed at being unable to attend; and he wrote to express his regret, adding:

"In these days when the literature of narrative and verse seems to be losing its qualities as an art, and to be assuming a structureless and conglomerate character, it is a privilege that we should have come into our midst a writer who is faithful to the principles that make for permanence, who never forgets the value of organic form and symmetry, the force of reserve, and the emphasis of understatement, even in his lighter works."

In February of the year following (1914) the subject of this memoir married the present writer.

In the spring of the same year Hardy was at the dinner of the Royal Academy, and he and his wife saw several friends in London, afterwards proceeding to Cambridge, where they spent a pleasant week in visiting and meeting Mr. Arthur Benson, Professor and Mrs. Bury, Mr. and Mrs. Cockerell, Professor Quiller-Couch, the Master of Jesus, Dr. James, Provost of King's, Dr. and Mrs. McTaggart, and the oldest friend of Hardy's in Cambridge, or for that matter anywhere, Mr. Charles Moule, President and formerly Tutor of Corpus, who had known him as a boy. A dinner at St. John's—the "Porte-Latin Feast"—with the mellow radiance of the dark mahogany tables, curling tobacco smoke, and old red wine, charmed Hardy, in spite of his drinking very little, and not smoking at all.

A visit to Girton and tea with Miss Jones and members of her staff ended the Cambridge week for them.

Although Hardy had no sort of anticipation of the restrictions that the war was so soon to bring on motoring, he went about in a car this early summer almost as if he foresaw what was coming, taking his wife to Exeter, Plymouth, and back across Dartmoor.

After serving as a Grand Juror at the Assizes he dined during June with the Royal Institute of British Architects, a body of which he had never lost sight on account of his early associations with the profession, though nearly all the members he had known—except his old acquaintance, the Vice-President, John Slater, and the Blomfields —had passed away.

A communication from men of letters and art in Germany who thought of honouring the memory of Friedrich Nietzsche on the seventieth anniversary of his birth, was the occasion of Hardy's writing at this date:

"It is a question whether Nietzsche's philosophy is sufficiently coherent to be of great ultimate value, and whether those views of his which seem so novel and striking appear thus only because they have been rejected for so many centuries as inadmissible under humane rule.

"A continuity of consciousness through the human race would be the only justification of his proposed measures.

"He assumes throughout the great worth intrinsically of human masterfulness. The universe is to him a perfect machine which only requires thorough handling to work wonders. He forgets that the universe is an imperfect machine, and that to do good with an ill-working instrument requires endless adjustments and compromises."

There was nothing to tell of the convulsion of nations that was now imminent, and in Dorset they visited various friends and stayed a week-end with Sir Henry and Lady Hoare at Stourhead (where they met as their fellow-guests

MRS. HARDY

From a drawing by W. Strang, R.A.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Whibley, the former of whom Hardy had long known, though they had not met for years). To Hardy as to ordinary civilians the murder at Serajevo was a lurid and striking tragedy, but carried no indication that it would much affect English life. On July 28th they were at a quiet little garden party near Dorchester, and still there was no sign of the coming storm: the next day they lunched about five miles off with friends at Ilsington, and paid a call or two—this being the day on which war was declared by Austria on Serbia. Hardy made a few entries just after this date:

"*August* 4, 11 P.M. War declared with Germany."

On this day they were lunching at Athelhampton Hall, six miles off, where a telegram came announcing the rumour to be fact. A discussion arose about food, and there was almost a panic at the table, nobody having any stock. But the full dimensions of what the English declaration meant were not quite realized at once. Their host disappeared to inquire into his stock of flour. The whole news and what it involved burst upon Hardy's mind next morning, for though most people were saying the war would be over by Christmas he felt it might be a matter of years and untold disaster.

"*August* 9-15. English Expeditionary Force crosses the Channel to assist France and Belgium."

"*August* onwards. War excitement. 'Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi!' " It was the quotation Hardy had made at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war forty-four years earlier, when he was quite a young man.

He had been completely at fault, as he often owned, on the coming so soon of such a convulsion as the war, though only three or four months before it broke out he had printed a prophetic poem in the *Fortnightly* entitled "Channel Firing", whereof the theme,

> All nations striving strong to make
> Red war yet redder,

was, to say the least, a perception singularly coincident. However, as stated, that it would really burst, he doubted. When the noisy crew of music-hall Jingoes said exultingly, years earlier, that Germany was as anxious for war as they were themselves, he had felt convinced that they were wrong. He had thought that the play, *An Englishman's Home*, which he witnessed by chance when it was produced, ought to have been suppressed as provocative, since it gave Germany, even if pacific in intention beforehand, a reason, or excuse, for directing her mind on a war with England. A long study of the European wars of a century earlier had made it appear to him that common sense had taken the place of bluster in men's minds; and he felt this so strongly that in the very year before war burst on Europe he wrote some verses called "His Country", bearing on the decline of antagonism between peoples; and as long before as 1901 he composed a poem called "The Sick Battle-God", which assumed that zest for slaughter was dying out. It was seldom he had felt so heavy at heart as in seeing his old view of the gradual bettering of human nature, as expressed in these verses of 1901, completely shattered by the events of 1914 and onwards. War, he had supposed, had grown too coldly scientific to kindle again for long all the ardent romance which had characterized it down to Napoleonic times, when the most intense battles were over in a day, and the most exciting tactics and strategy led to the death of comparatively few combatants. Hence nobody was more amazed than he at the German incursion into Belgium, and the contemplation of it led him to despair of the world's history thenceforward. He had not reckoned on the power still retained there by the governing castes whose interests were not the people's. It was, however, no use to despair, and since Germany had not shown the rationality he had expected of her, he presently began to consider if there was anything he—an old man of seventy-four—could do in the critical circum-

stances. A slight opening seemed to offer when he received a letter from the Government asking his attendance at a private Conference in which eminent literary men and women who commanded confidence abroad "should take steps to place the strength of the British case and the principles for which the British troops and their allies are fighting before the populations of neutral countries". He went to London expressly to attend, as explained in the following memorandum:

"*September* 2. To London in obedience to a summons by Mr. Masterman, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, at the instance of the Cabinet, for the organization of public statements of the strength of the British case and principles in the war by well-known men of letters."

This meeting was at Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, and in view of what the country was entering on has a historic significance. There was a medley of writers present, including, in addition to the Chairman, Mr. Masterman, among Hardy's friends and acquaintance, Sir James Barrie, Sir Henry Newbolt, J. W. Mackail, Arthur and Monsignor Benson, John Galsworthy, Sir Owen Seaman, G. M. Trevelyan, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, John Masefield, Robert Bridges, Anthony Hope Hawkins, Gilbert Murray, and many others. Whatever the effect of the discussion, the scene was impressive to more than one of them there. In recalling it Hardy said that the yellow September sun shone in from the dusty street with a tragic cast upon them as they sat round the large blue table, full of misgivings, yet unforeseeing in all their completeness the tremendous events that were to follow. The same evening Hardy left London—"the streets hot and sad, and bustling with soldiers and recruits"—to set about some contribution to the various forms of manifesto that had been discussed.

In Dorset the Hardys kept up between-whiles their

motoring through September, visiting Broadwindsor, Axminster, the summit called "Cross-in-hand", from which both the Bristol and English Channels are visible, and on which many years earlier Hardy had written a traditional poem, "The Lost Pyx"; also Bridport, Abbotsbury, Portisham, including the old residence of Admiral Hardy's father, still intact with its dial in the garden, dated 1767.

In the same month he published in *The Times* the soldiers' war-song called "Men who March Away", which won an enormous popularity; and in October wrote "England to Germany", a sonnet "On the Belgian Expatriation" for *King Albert's Book*, and in the papers a letter on the destruction of Reims Cathedral. This month, too, he brought out another volume of verses entitled *Satires of Circumstance, Lyrics and Reveries*—the book being made up of the "Satires in Fifteen Glimpses", published in a periodical in 1911, and other poems of a very different kind with which the satires ill harmonized—the latter filling but fifteen pages in a volume of 230 pages. These were caustically humorous productions which had been issued with a light heart before the war. So much shadow, domestic and public, had passed over his head since he had written the satires that he was in no mood now to publish humour or irony, and hence he would readily have suppressed them if they had not already gained such currency from magazine publication that he could not do it. The "Lyrics and Reveries", which filled the far greater part of the volume, contained some of the tenderest and least satirical verse that ever came from his pen.

In November he and his wife went to London to a rehearsal of a portion of *The Dynasts*, which Mr. Granville-Barker was then preparing for the stage at the Kingsway Theatre, and which was produced there on the 25th November, though the author had never dreamt of a single scene of it being staged. Owing to a cold Hardy was

unable to be present on the first representation, but he went up two or three weeks later.

Hardy's idea had been that the performance should be called what it really was, namely, "Scenes from *The Dynasts*"—as being less liable to misconception than the book-title unmodified, since people might suppose the whole epic-drama was to be presented, which was quite an impossibility. However, as the scheme of the production was Mr. Granville-Barker's own, as he had himself selected all the scenes, Hardy did not interfere, either with this or any other detail. The one feature he could particularly have wished altered was that of retaining indoor architecture for outdoor scenes, it being difficult for the spectator to realize—say in the Battle of Waterloo—that an open field was represented when pillars and architraves hemmed it in. He thought that for the open scenes a perfectly plain green floorcloth and blue backcloth would have suited better. But the theatre's resources of space were very limited. However, the production was artistically successful.

More verses on the war were written by Hardy in December, including "An Appeal to America". A sad vigil, during which no bells were heard at Max Gate, brought in the first New Year of this unprecedented "breaking of nations".

It may be added here that the war destroyed all Hardy's belief in the gradual ennoblement of man, a belief he had held for many years, as is shown by poems like "The Sick Battle-God", and others. He said he would probably not have ended *The Dynasts* as he did end it if he could have foreseen what was going to happen within a few years.

Moreover, the war gave the *coup de grâce* to any conception he may have nourished of a fundamental ultimate Wisdom at the back of things. With his views on necessitation, or at most a very limited free will, events seemed to

show him that a fancy he had often held and expressed, that the never-ending push of the Universe was an unpurposive and irresponsible groping in the direction of the least resistance, might possibly be the real truth. "Whether or no", he would say,

"Desine fata Deûm flecti sperare precando."

Photo] [*E. O. Hoppé*

MR. AND MRS. HARDY AT MAX GATE, 1914

CHAPTER XIV

WAR EFFORTS, DEATHS OF RELATIVES, AND "MOMENTS OF VISION"

1915–1917: *Aet.* 74–77

He seems to have been studying the *Principia Ethica* of Dr. G. E. Moore early this year; and also the philosophy of Bergson. Writing on the latter in answer to a letter from Dr. C. W. Saleeby on the subject, he states:

"I suppose I may think that you are more or less a disciple of his, or fellow-philosopher with him. Therefore you may be rather shocked at some views I hold about his teaching—or did hold, anyhow. His theories are much pleasanter ones than those they contest, and I for one would gladly believe them; but I cannot help feeling all the time that his is rather an imaginative and poetical mind than a reasoner's, and that for his charming and attractive assertions he does not adduce any proofs whatever. His use of the word 'creation' seems to me loose and vague. Then as to conduct: I fail to see how, if it is not mechanism, it can be other than caprice, though he denies it. Yet I quite agree with him in regarding finalism as an erroneous doctrine. He says, however, that mechanism and finalism are only external views of our conduct—'Our conduct extends between them, and slips much further'. Well it may, but he nowhere shows that it does.

"Then again: 'A mechanistic conception . . . treats the living as the inert. . . . Let us, on the contrary, trace a line of demarcation between the inert and the living.' Well,

let us, to our great pleasure, if we can see why we should introduce an inconsistent rupture of Order into a uniform and consistent Law of the same.

"You will see how much I want to have the pleasure of being a Bergsonian. But I fear his theory is, in the bulk, only our old friend Dualism in a new suit of clothes—an ingenious fancy without real foundation, and more complicated than the fancies he endeavours to overthrow.

"You must not think me a hard-headed rationalist for all this. Half my time—particularly when writing verse—I 'believe' (in the modern sense of the word) not only in the things Bergson believes in, but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places, etc., etc. But I do not believe in them in the old sense of the word any more for that. . . .

"By the way, how do you explain the following from the *Cambridge Magazine*, by a writer whom I imagine to be of a school of thinkers akin to your own, concerning Herbert Spencer's doctrine of the Unknowable?

" 'We doubt if there is a single philosopher alive to-day who would subscribe to it. Even men of science are gradually discarding it in favour of Realism and Pragmatism.'

"I am utterly bewildered to understand how the doctrine that, beyond the knowable, there must always be an unknown, can be displaced."

In April a distant cousin of promising ability—a lieutenant in the 5th Batt. Dorset Regiment—came to see him before going abroad, never to be seen by him again; and in the following month he sat to Mr. [Sir Hamo] Thornycroft for a model of a head which the sculptor wished to make. At home he heard that two single-page songs in manuscript which he had sent to the Red Cross Sale at Christie's had fetched £48—"Men who March Away" and "The Night of Trafalgar".

"*May* 14. Have been reading a review of Henry James.

It is remarkable that a writer who has no grain of poetry, or humour, or spontaneity in his productions, can yet be a good novelist. Meredith has some poetry, and yet I can read James when I cannot look at Meredith."

"*May* 27. 'Georgian Poets'. It is a pity that these promising young writers adopted such a title. The use of it lacks the modesty of true genius, as it confuses the poetic chronology, and implies that the hitherto recognized original Georgians—Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Byron, etc., are negligible; or at any rate says that they do not care whether it implies such or no."

"*June* 10. Motored with F. to Bridport, Lyme, Exeter, and Torquay. Called on Mr. and Mrs. Eden Phillpotts. Saw their garden and beautiful flowers. Then back to Teignmouth, Dawlish, and Exeter, putting up at the 'Clarence' opposite the Cathedral."

"*June* 11. To Cathedral—then home via Honiton, Chard, Crewkerne."

In July they were in London on a visit to Lady St. Helier, and paid a long-promised call on Sir Frederick and Lady Treves in Richmond Park. Later on in the month he was at the funeral at Stinsford of a suddenly lost friend, Mr. Douglas Thornton the banker, and received visits from Sir Henry Hoare, who motored over from Stourhead, and Professor Flinders Petrie, whom he had known but not seen for many years.

In August he learnt of the loss of his second cousin's son, Lieutenant George, who had been killed that month in Gallipoli during a brave advance. Hardy makes this note of him:

"Frank George, though so remotely related, is the first one of my family to be killed in battle for the last hundred years, so far as I know. He might say Militavi non sine gloria—short as his career has been."

In the autumn Hardy sometimes, and his wife continu-

ally, assisted in the evenings at the soldiers' tea-room established in the Dorchester Corn Exchange; they visited the Australian Camp near Weymouth, and spent two or three days at Melbury House. On returning he learnt that his elder sister was again seriously ill. She died the same week, at his brother's house at Talbothays. The two poems, "Logs on the Hearth" and "In the Garden", in *Moments of Vision*, evidently refer to her, as also the Fourth person in "Looking Across", in the same volume.

The hobby of her life had been portrait-painting, and she had shown great aptitude in catching a likeness, particularly of her relations, her picture of her mother in oils bearing a striking resemblance to the striking original. But she had been doomed to school-teaching, and organ-playing in this or that village church during all her active years, and hence was unable to devote sufficient time to pictorial art till leisure was too late to be effective. Her character was a somewhat unusual one, being remarkably unassertive, even when she was in the right, and could easily have proved it; so that the point of the following remark about her is manifest:

"*November* 29. Buried her under the yew-tree where the rest of us lie. As Mr. Cowley read the words of the psalm 'Dixi Custodiam' they reminded me strongly of her nature, particularly when she was young: 'I held my tongue and spake nothing: I kept silence, yea, even from good words.' That was my poor Mary exactly. She never defended herself; and that not from timidity, but indifference to opinion."

The funeral day had been cold and wet, and Hardy was laid up till the end of the year with a violent bronchitis and racking cough. Nevertheless, during December, in response to a request from Winchester House for a contribution to a "Pro-Ally Film" of paragraphs in facsimile from authors' writings, which was "to be exhibited throughout the world and make its appeal particularly

to the neutral nations", he was able to send the following passages from Pitt's actual speech in the House of Commons a hundred years earlier, as closely paraphrased in *The Dynasts*:

ENGLAND AT BAY

The strange fatality that haunts the times
Wherein our lot is cast, has no example;
Times are they fraught with peril, trouble, gloom;
We have to mark their lourings and to face them.

ENGLAND RESOLUTE

Unprecedented and magnificent
As were our strivings in the previous wars,
Our efforts in the present shall transcend them,
As men will learn.

In January of the next year (1916) a war ballad of some weirdness, called "The Dead and the Living One", which had been written several months before, was published in the *Sphere* and the *New York World*, and later reprinted in *Moments of Vision*.

In February he was again confined to his room with a cold, the previous one never having quite gone off. But he managed to send to the Red Cross Sale for this year, not any work of his own, but "A Sheaf of Victorian Letters", written to T. H. by many other writers, nearly all deceased, and of a very interesting kind. Mrs. Hardy also sent to the same sale three short MSS. of his: "The Oxen", "The Breaking of Nations", and a fragment of a story—the whole fetching £72 : 10s.

A *Book of Homage* to Shakespeare was printed in April, for which Hardy had written a piece entitled "To Shakespeare after three hundred years", afterwards included in the volume called *Moments of Vision*.

In June he served again as Grand Juror at the Assizes, and was at a rehearsal in Dorchester of *Wessex Scenes*

from The Dynasts. This, made by "The Hardy Players", was quite a different selection from that of Mr. Granville-Barker, embracing scenes of a local character only, from which could be gathered in echoes of drum and trumpet and alarming rumours, the great events going on elsewhere. Though more limited in scope than the former, it was picturesque and effective as performed by the local actors at the Weymouth Pavilion a fortnight later, and was well appreciated by the London press.

In the same month of June he paid a visit with his wife and remaining sister to a house he had never entered for forty years. This was Riverside Villa, Sturminster Newton —the first he had furnished after his first marriage, and in which he had written *The Return of the Native*. He found it much as it had been in the former years; and it was possibly this visit which suggested the poems about Sturminster that were published in *Moments of Vision*. Motorings to Melbury again, to Swanage, and again to Bridport, passed the midsummer days.

"*July* 27. *Times Literary Supplement* on 'What is Militarism?' The article suggests a term to express the cause of the present war, 'hypochondria' (in the Prussians). I should rather have said '*apprehensiveness*'. The term would fit some of the facts like a glove."

In September they set out by train for Cornwall, breaking the journey at Launceston. Thence they went on to Camelford, Boscastle, and St. Juliot, to see if Hardy's design and inscription for the tablet in the church had been properly carried out and erected. At Tintagel they met quite by accident Hardy's friends the Stuart-Wortleys, which made their sojourn at that romantic spot a very pleasant one.

"*September* 10. Sunday. To Tintagel Church. We sat down in a seat bordering the passage to the transept, but the vicar appalled us by coming to us in his surplice and saying we were in the way of the choir, who would have to pass there. He banished us to the back of the transept.

However, when he began his sermon we walked out. He thought it was done to be even with him, and looked his indignation; but it was really because we could not see the nave lengthwise, which my wife, Emma, had sketched in watercolours when she was a young woman before it was 'restored', so that I was interested in noting the changes, as also was F., who was familiar with the sketch. It was saddening enough, though doubtless only a chance, that we were inhospitably received in a church so much visited and appreciated by one we both had known so well. The matter was somewhat mended, however, by their singing the beautiful 34th Psalm to Smart's fine tune, 'Wiltshire'. By the by, that the most poetical verse of that psalm is omitted from it in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* shows the usual ineptness of hymn selectors. We always sang it at Stinsford. But then, we sang there in the good old High-and Dry Church way—straight from the New Version."

Multifarious matters filled up the autumn—among others a visit to the large camp of some 5000 German prisoners in Dorchester; also visits to the English wounded in hospital, which conjunction led him to say:

"At the German prisoners' camp, including the hospital, operating-room, etc., were many sufferers. One Prussian, in much pain, died whilst I was with him — to my great relief, and his own. Men lie helpless here from wounds: in the hospital a hundred yards off other men, English, lie helpless from wounds—each scene of suffering caused by the other!

"These German prisoners seem to think that we are fighting to exterminate Germany, and though it has been said that, so far from it, we are fighting to save what is best in Germany, Cabinet ministers do not in my opinion speak this out clearly enough."

In October the *Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy* were published in Macmillan's Golden Treasury Series, a little

book that received some very good reviews; and in December the *Wessex Scenes from The Dynasts*, which had been produced earlier at Weymouth, were performed at Dorchester. Some of Hardy's friends, including Sir James Barrie and Mr. Sydney Cockerell, came to see the piece, but Hardy could not accompany them, being kept in bed by another cold. The performances were for Red Cross Societies.

"*January* 1, 1917. Am scarcely conscious of New Year's Day."

"*January* 6. I find I wrote in 1888 that 'Art is concerned with seemings only', which is true."

To the Secretary of the Royal Society of Literature.

"*February* 8, 1917.

"DEAR SIR,

"I regret that as I live in a remote part of the country I cannot attend the meeting of the Entente Committee.

"In respect of the Memorandum proposing certain basic principles of international education for promoting ethical ideals that shall conduce to a League of Peace, I am in hearty agreement with the proposition.

"I would say in considering a *modus operandi*:

"That nothing effectual will be accomplished in the cause of *Peace* till the sentiment of *Patriotism* be freed from the narrow meaning attaching to it in the past (still upheld by Junkers and Jingoists) and be extended to the whole globe.

"On the other hand, that the sentiment of *Foreignness*—if the sense of a contrast be really rhetorically necessary—attach only to other planets and their inhabitants, if any.

"I may add that I have been writing in advocacy of those views for the last twenty years."

To Dr. L. Litwinski.

"*March* 7, 1917.

"DEAR SIR,

"I feel much honoured by your request that I should be a member of the Committee for commemorating two such writers of distinction as Verhaeren and Sienkiewicz. But for reasons of increasing years and my living so far from London I have latterly been compelled to give up membership with several associations; and I am therefore sorry to say that I must refrain from joining any new committee in which I should be unable actively to support the cause, even when so worthy as the present one."

In this March also a sonnet by him named "A Call to National Service" was printed in the newspapers. An article in the April *Fortnightly* by Mr. Courtney, the editor, on Hardy's writings, especially *The Dynasts*, interested him not only by its appreciativeness, but also by the aspect some features of the drama assumed in the reviewer's mind:

"Like so many critics, Mr. Courtney treats my works of art as if they were a scientific system of philosophy, although I have repeatedly stated in prefaces and elsewhere that the views in them are *seemings*, provisional impressions only, used for artistic purposes because they represent approximately the impressions of the age, and are plausible, till somebody produces better theories of the universe.

"As to his winding up about a God of Mercy, etc.—if I wished to make a smart retort, which I really should hate doing, I might say that the Good-God theory having, after some thousands of years of trial, produced the present infamous and disgraceful state of Europe—that most Christian Continent!—a theory of a Goodless-and-Badless God (as in *The Dynasts*) might perhaps be given a trial with advantage.

"Much confusion has arisen and much nonsense has been talked latterly in connection with the word 'atheist'. I have never understood how anybody can be one except in the sense of disbelieving in a tribal god, man-shaped, fiery-faced and tyrannous, who flies into a rage on the slightest provocation; or as (according to Horace Walpole) Sir Francis Dashwood defined the Providence believed in by the Lord Shrewsbury of that date to be—a figure like an old angry man in a blue cloak. . . . Fifty meanings attach to the word 'God' nowadays, the only reasonable meaning being the *Cause of Things*, whatever that cause may be.[1] Thus no modern thinker can be an atheist in the modern sense, while all modern thinkers are atheists in the ancient and exploded sense."

In this connection he said once—perhaps oftener—that although invidious critics had cast slurs upon him as Nonconformist, Agnostic, Atheist, Infidel, Immoralist, Heretic, Pessimist, or something else equally opprobrious in their eyes, they had never thought of calling him what they might have called him much more plausibly—churchy; not in an intellectual sense, but in so far as instincts and emotions ruled. As a child, to be a parson had been his dream; moreover, he had had several clerical relatives who held livings; while his grandfather, father, uncle, brother, wife, cousin, and two sisters had been musicians in various churches over a period covering altogether more than a hundred years. He himself had frequently read the church lessons, and had at one time as a young man begun reading for Cambridge with a view to taking Orders.

His vision had often been that of so many people brought up under Church of England influences, a giving of liturgical form to modern ideas, and expressing them in the same old buildings that had already seen previous

[1] In another place he says "Cause" means really but the "invariable antecedent".

reforms successfully carried out. He would say to his friends, the Warden of Keble, Arthur Benson, and others, that if the bishops only had a little courage, and would modify the liturgy by dropping preternatural assumptions out of it, few churchgoers would object to the change for long, and congregations would be trebled in a brief time. The idea was clearly expressed in the "Apology" prefixed to *Late Lyrics and Earlier*.

"*June* 9. It is now the time of long days, when the sun seems reluctant to take leave of the trees at evening—the shine climbing up the trunks, reappearing higher, and still fondly grasping the tree-tops till long after."

Later in the month his friend J. M. Barrie suggested that Hardy should go with him to France, to which proposal Hardy replied:

"MAX GATE, DORCHESTER,
"23 *June* 1917.

"MY DEAR BARRIE,

"It was so kind of you to concoct that scheme for my accompanying you to the Front—or Back—in France. I thought it over carefully, as it was an attractive idea. But I have had to come to the conclusion that old men cannot be young men, and that I must content myself with the past battles of our country if I want to feel military. If I had been ten years younger I would have gone.

"I hope you will have a pleasant, or rather, impressive, time, and the good company you will be in will be helpful all round. I am living in hope of seeing you on the date my wife has fixed and of renewing acquaintance with my old friend Adelphi Terrace.

"Always sincerely yours,
"THOMAS HARDY."

In July his poem "Then and Now" was printed in *The Times*, and in the latter half of the month he and his wife paid a visit of two days to J. M. Barrie at Adelphi Terrace

—a spot with which Hardy had had years of familiarity when their entertainer was still a child, and which was attractive to him on that account. Here they had some interesting meetings with other writers. Upon one memorable evening they sat in a large empty room, which was afterwards to be Sir James's study but was then being altered and decorated. From the windows they had a fine view over the Thames, and searchlights wheeled across the sky. The only illumination within the room was from candles placed on the floor to avoid breaking war regulations, which forbade too bright lighting.

He came back to pack up in August his MS. of *Moments of Vision* and send to the Messrs. Macmillan.

In October he went with Mrs. Hardy to Plymouth, calling for a day or two upon Mr. and Mrs. Eden Phillpotts at Torquay on their way. But the weather being wet at Plymouth they abandoned their stay there and came home.

"I hold that the mission of poetry is to record impressions, not convictions. Wordsworth in his later writings fell into the error of recording the latter. So also did Tennyson, and so do many other poets when they grow old. *Absit omen!*

"I fear I have always been considered the Dark Horse of contemporary English literature.

"I was quick to bloom; late to ripen.

"I believe it would be said by people who knew me well that I have a faculty (possibly not uncommon) for burying an emotion in my heart or brain for forty years, and exhuming it at the end of that time as fresh as when interred. For instance, the poem entitled 'The Breaking of Nations' contains a feeling that moved me in 1870, during the Franco-Prussian war, when I chanced to be looking at such an agricultural incident in Cornwall. But I did not write the verses till during the war with Germany of 1914, and onwards. Query: where was that sentiment hiding itself during more than forty years?"

Hardy's mind seems to have been running on himself at this time to a degree quite unusual with him, who often said—and his actions showed it—that he took no interest in himself as a personage.

"*November* 13. I was a child till I was 16; a youth till I was 25; a young man till I was 40 or 50."

The above note on his being considered a Dark Horse was apt enough, when it is known that none of the society men who met him suspected from his simple manner the potentialities of observation that were in him. This unassertive air, unconsciously worn, served him as an invisible coat almost to uncanniness. At houses and clubs where he encountered other writers and critics and world-practised readers of character, whose bearing towards him was often as towards one who did not reach their altitudes, he was seeing through them as though they were glass. He set down some cutting and satirical notes on their qualities and compass, but destroyed all of them, not wishing to leave behind him anything which could be deemed a gratuitous belittling of others.

This month *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses* was published, and it may have been his occupation with the proofs that had set him thinking of himself; and also caused him to make the following entry: "I do not expect much notice will be taken of these poems: they mortify the human sense of self-importance by showing, or suggesting, that human beings are of no matter or appreciable value in this nonchalant universe." He subjoined the Dedication of *Sordello*, where the author remarks: "My own faults of expression are many; but with care for a man or book such would be surmounted, and without it what avails the faultlessness of either?"

It was in this mood that he read such reviews of the book as were sent him.

"*December* 31. *New Year's Eve.* Went to bed at eleven.

East wind. No bells heard. Slept in the New Year, as did also those 'out there'."

This refers to the poem called "Looking Across" published in the new volume, Stinsford Churchyard lying across the mead from Max Gate.

PART IV

LIFE'S DECLINE

CHAPTER XV

REFLECTIONS ON POETRY

1918: *Aet.* 77–78

On January 2 Hardy attended a performance of the women land-workers in the Corn Exchange. "Met there Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, Lady Shaftesbury, and other supporters of the movement. The girls looked most picturesque in their raiment of emancipation, which they evidently enjoyed wearing."

Meanwhile the shadows lengthened. In the second week of the month he lost his warm-hearted neighbour, Mrs. A. Brinsley Sheridan, *née* Motley, of Frampton Court. "An old friend of thirty-two years' standing. She was, I believe, the first to call when we entered this house at Max Gate, and she remained staunch to the end of her days."

"*January* 16. As to reviewing. Apart from a few brilliant exceptions, poetry is not at bottom criticized as such, that is, as a particular man's artistic interpretation of life, but with a secret eye on its theological and political propriety. Swinburne used to say to me that so it would be two thousand years hence; but I doubt it.

"As to pessimism. My motto is, first correctly diagnose the complaint—in this case human ills—and ascertain the cause: then set about finding a remedy if one exists. The motto or practice of the optimists is: Blind the eyes to the real malady, and use empirical panaceas to suppress the symptoms.

"Browning said (in a line cited against me so often):

Never dreamed though right were worsted wrong would triumph.

"Well, that was a lucky dreamlessness for Browning. It kept him comfortably unaware of those millions who cry with the Chorus in *Hellas*: 'Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream, Salutes the rising sun!'[1]—or with Hyllus in the *Trachiniae*: 'Mark the vast injustice of the gods!'"[2]

"*January* 24. It is *the unwilling mind* that stultifies the contemporary criticism of poetry."

"*January* 25. The reviewer so often supposes that where Art is not visible it is unknown to the poet under criticism. Why does he not think of the art of concealing art? There is a good reason why."

"*January* 30. English writers who endeavour to appraise poets, and discriminate the sheep from the goats, are apt to consider that all true poets must be of one pattern in their lives and developments. But the glory of poetry lies in its largeness, admitting among its creators men of infinite variety. They must all be impractical in the conduct of their affairs; nay, they must almost, like Shelley or Marlowe, be drowned or done to death, or like Keats, die of consumption. They forget that in the ancient world no such necessity was recognized; that Homer sang as a blind old man, that Aeschylus wrote his best up to his death at nearly seventy, that the best of Sophocles appeared between his fifty-fifth and ninetieth years, that Euripides wrote up to seventy.

"Among those who accomplished late, the poetic spark must always have been latent; but its outspringing may have been frozen and delayed for half a lifetime."

"*January* 31. Performance of *The Mellstock Quire* at the Corn Exchange, Dorchester, by the local Company for Hospital purposes. Arranged for the admission of the

[1] Shelley's *Hellas*, line 940. [2] Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, 1266.

present 'Mellstock' Quire to see the resuscitated ghosts of their predecessors."

The romantic name of "Little Hintock" in *The Woodlanders* was advanced to a practical application in the February of this year by a request from Mr. Dampier Whetham, once Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, whose hobby when in his Dorset home was dairy farming, to be allowed to define as the "Hintock" herd, the fine breed of pedigree cattle he was establishing in the district which Hardy had described under that fictitious name.

In a United States periodical for March it was stated that "Thomas Hardy is a realistic novelist who . . . has a grim determination to go down to posterity wearing the laurels of a poet". This writer was a glaring illustration of the danger of reading motives into actions. Of course there was no "grim determination", no thought of "laurels". Thomas Hardy was always a person with an unconscious, or rather unreasoning, *tendency*, and the poetic tendency had been his from the earliest. He would tell that it used to be said to him at Sir Arthur Blomfield's: "Hardy, there can hardly have been anybody in the world with less ambition than you." At this time the real state of his mind was, in his own words, that "A sense of the truth of poetry, of its supreme place in literature, had awakened itself in me. At the risk of ruining all my wordly prospects I dabbled in it . . . was forced out of it. . . . It came back upon me. . . . All was of the nature of being led by a mood, without foresight, or regard to whither it led."

To Professor D. A. Robertson, University of Chicago.

"*February 7th*, 1918.

"In reply to your inquiry if I am likely to visit the

United States after the war, I am sorry to say that such an event is highly improbable. . . .

"The opinion you quote from Lord Bryce to the effect that Americans do not think internationally, leads one to ask, Does any country think internationally? I should say, none. But there can be no doubt that some countries think thus more nearly than others; and in my opinion the people of America far more than the people of England."

In April there was sold at Christie's Red Cross Sale the manuscript of *Far from the Madding Crowd*. The interest of the latter—at least to Hardy himself—lay in the fact of it being a *revenant*—that for forty years he had had no other idea but that the manuscript had been "pulped" after its use in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1874, since it had completely disappeared, not having been sent back with the proofs. Hardy's rather whimsical regret was that he had not written it on better paper, unforeseeing the preservation. It afterwards came to his knowledge that after the sale it went to America, and ultimately was bought of a New York dealer for the collection of Mr. A. E. Newton of Pennsylvania.

"*April* 30. By the will of God some men are born poetical. Of these some make themselves practical poets, others are made poets by lapse of time who were hardly recognized as such. Particularly has this been the case with the translators of the Bible. They translated into the language of their age; then the years began to corrupt that language as spoken, and to add grey lichen to the translation; until the moderns who use the corrupted tongue marvel at the poetry of the old words. When new they were not more than half so poetical. So that Coverdale, Tyndale, and the rest of them are as ghosts what they never were in the flesh."

"*May* 8. A letter from Sir George Douglas carries me

back to Wimborne and the time when his brother Frank lived opposite us there in the Avenue:

> They are great trees, no doubt, by now,
> That were so thin in bough—
> That row of limes—
> When we housed there; I'm loth to reckon when;
> The world has turned so many times,
> So many, since then!"

Whether any more of this poem was written is not known.

Two days later Hardy was seized with a violent cough and cold which confined him for a week. However, he was well enough by the 23rd to adjudicate at the Police Court on several food-profiteering cases, undertaken as being "the only war-work I was capable of", and to receive some old friends, including Sydney Cockerell, John Powys, Lady Ilchester, and her mother, Lady Londonderry, of whom he says: "Never saw her again: I had known her for more than twenty-five years". A little later came Mrs. Henry Allhusen, whom he had known from her childhood, Sir Frederick Treves, and Mr. H. M. and Mrs. Rosalind Hyndman (a charming woman), who were staying at Dorchester for the benefit of the air.

Some sense of the neglect of poetry by the modern English may have led him to write at this time:

"The poet is like one who enters and mounts a platform to give an address as announced. He opens his page, looks around, and finds the hall—*empty*."

A little later he says:

"It bridges over the years to think that Gray might have seen Wordsworth in his cradle, and Wordsworth might have seen me in mine."

Some days later:

"The people in Shakespeare act as if they were not quite closely thinking of what they are doing, but were

great philosophers giving the main of their mind to the general human situation.

"I agree with Tennyson, who said he could form no idea how Shakespeare came to write his plays.

"My opinion is that a poet should express the emotion of all the ages and the thought of his own."

CHAPTER XVI

POETICAL QUESTIONS: AND MELLSTOCK CLUB-ROOM

1918–1919: *Aet.* 78–79

"*Sunday, June* 2. Seventy-eighth birthday. Several letters." Among others was an interesting one from a lady who informed him that some years earlier she had been made the happiest woman in the world by accidentally meeting for the first time, by the "Druid Stone" on his lawn, at the late Mrs. Hardy's last garden-party, the man who was now her husband. And a little later came one he much valued, from a man he long had known—Mr. Charles Moule, Senior Fellow and President of Corpus, Cambridge, enclosing a charming poem to Hardy as his "almost lifelong friend . . . Too seldom seen since far-off times"—times when the two had visited mediæval buildings together, and dived from a boat on summer mornings into the green water of Weymouth Bay.

In September 1918 he received a circular letter asking him to assist in bringing home to people certain facts relating to the future with a view to finding a remedy, and stating that, "It is agreed by all students of modern military methods that this war, horrible as it seems to us, is merciful in comparison with what future wars must be. Scientific munition-making is only in its infancy. The next world-war, if there is another, will find the nations provided not with thousands, but with hundreds of thousands of submarines, and all these as far surpassing the present types in power and destructiveness as they surpass the feeble beginnings of ten years ago. . . ."

In his reply he remarked:

"If it be all true that the letter prophesies, I do not think a world in which such fiendishness is possible to be worth the saving. Better let Western 'civilization' perish, and the black and yellow races have a chance.

"However, as a meliorist (not a pessimist as they say) I think better of the world."

"*December* 31. New Year's Eve. Did not sit up."

At the beginning of the year 1919 Hardy received a letter and volume of verses from Miss Amy Lowell, the American poetess, who reminded him of her call at the beginning of the war—"two bedraggled ladies", herself and her friend. Hardy did remember, and their consternation lest they should not be able to get back to their own country.

In February he signed a declaration of sympathy with the Jews in support of a movement for "the reconstitution of Palestine as a National Home for the Jewish People", and during the spring he received letters from Quiller-Couch, Crichton-Browne, and other friends on near and dear relatives they had lost in the war; about the same time there appeared a relevant poem by Hardy in the *Athenæum* which was much liked, entitled in words from the Burial Service, "According to the Mighty Working".

In May Edmund Gosse wrote that he was very curious to know who drew the rather unusual illustration on the cover of the first edition of *The Trumpet-Major*. Hardy was blank on the matter for a time, until, finding a copy, he remembered that he drew it himself.

Being in London for a few days the same month he went to the dinner of the Royal Academy—the first held since the war—with his friend J. M. Barrie, with whom he was then staying, and was saddened to find how many of the guests and Academicians that he had been formerly accustomed to meet there, had disappeared from the scene. He felt that he did not wish to go again, and, indeed, he

never did. Among the incidents of this visit was a meeting at Lady St. Helier's with Dr. Bernard, Archbishop of Dublin, and a discussion with him on Coverdale's translation of the Psalms, and the inferiority of the Latin Vulgate in certain passages of them, with which Dr. Bernard agreed, sending him afterwards the two versions in parallel readings.

On his birthday in June he did what he had long intended to do—took his wife and sister to Salisbury by the old road which had been travelled by his and their forefathers in their journeys to London—via Blandford, Woodyates Inn, and Harnham Hill, whence Constable had painted his famous view of the cathedral, and where the track was still accessible to wheels. Woodyates Inn—now no longer such, to the surprise of everybody since the revival of road traffic—still retained its genial hostelry appearance, and reminded Hardy of the entry in the diary of one of the daughters of George the Third after she and the rest of the family had halted there: "At Woodyates Inn . . . had a beastly breakfast". It is said that Browning's great-grandfather was once the landlord of this famous inn.

In a reply to a letter of this date concerning a new literary periodical started in Canada, he adds, after some commendatory remarks:

"But why does the paper stultify its earlier articles by advertising 'The Best Sellers'? Of all marks of the *un*literary journal this is the clearest. If the *Canadian Bookman* were to take a new line and advertise eulogistically the *worst* sellers, it might do something towards its object."

Replying to a birthday letter from Mrs. Arthur Henniker, Hardy writes:

"Max Gate, 5 *June* 1919.

"Sincere thanks for your good wishes, my dear friend, which I echo back towards you. I should care more for my birthdays if at each succeeding one I could see any sign of

real improvement in the world—as at one time I fondly hoped there was; but I fear that what appears much more evident is that it is getting worse and worse. All development is of a material and scientific kind—and scarcely any addition to our knowledge is applied to objects philanthropic and ameliorative. I almost think that people were less pitiless towards their fellow-creatures—human and animal—under the Roman Empire than they are now; so why does not Christianity throw up the sponge and say, I am beaten, and let another religion take its place?

"I suddenly remember that we had a call from our Bishop and his wife two or three days ago, so that perhaps it is rather shabby of me to write as above. By a curious coincidence we had motored to Salisbury that very day, and were in his cathedral when he was at our house.

"Do you mean to go to London for any length of time this summer? We are not going again till I don't know when. We squeezed a good deal into the four days we were there, and I got a bad throat as usual, but it has gone off. At Lady St. Helier's we met the Archbishop of Dublin (English Church), and found him a pleasant man. We also met several young poets at Barrie's, where we were staying.

"We do hope you are well—in 'rude health' as they call it. Florence sends her love, and I am,

"Ever affectionately,

"Th. H."

Shortly after his birthday he received a charming volume of holograph poems, beautifully bound, from some forty or fifty living poets. The mark of recognition so appealed to him that he determined to answer every one of the contributors by letter, and ultimately did so, though it took him a long while; saying that if they could take the trouble to write the poems he could certainly take the trouble to write the letters. It was almost his first awakening to the consciousness that an opinion had silently grown

MAX GATE. VIEW FROM THE LAWN, 1919

up as it were in the night, that he was no mean power in the contemporary world of poetry.

This "Poets' Tribute" had been arranged by his friend Siegfried Sassoon, who brought the gift and placed it in Hardy's hand.

It had impressed him all the more as coming just after his reading quite by chance in an Australian paper a quotation from a recent English review of his verse—belittling one of the poems—that called "On Sturminster Foot Bridge"—in a manner that showed the critic to be quite unaware of what was called "onomatopoeia" in poetry, the principle on which the lines had been composed. They were intended to convey by their rhythm the impression of a clucking of ripples into riverside holes when blown upon by an up-stream wind; so that when his reviewer jested on the syllables of the verse sounding like milk in a cart he was simply stating that the author had succeeded in doing what he had tried to do—the sounds being similar. As the jest by the English review had come back to England from Australia, where it had been quoted to Hardy's damage without the context, he took the trouble to explain the matter to the writer of the article, which he would probably have left undone if it had not so frequently happened that his intentions were shown up as blunders. But he did not get a more satisfactory reply than that the critics, like the writer, were sheep in wolves' clothing, and meant no harm.

Hardy's loyalty to his friends was shown by his devotion to the Moule family, members of which he had known intimately when he was a young man. The following is probably the last letter he wrote to one whom he could remember as a small boy:

"29 *June* 1919.

"My dear Bishop of Durham,

"You may agree with me in thinking it a curious coin-

cidence that the evening before your letter arrived, and when it probably was just posted, we were reading a chapter in Job, and on coming to the verse, 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come', I interrupted and said: 'That was the text of the Vicar of Fordington one Sunday evening about 1860'. And I can hear his voice repeating the text as the sermon went on—in the way they used to repeat it in those days—just as if it were yesterday. I wonder if you have ever preached from that text; I daresay you have. I should add that he delivered his discourse without note of any kind.

"My warm thanks for your good feeling about my birthday. The thoughts of friends about one at these times take off some of the sadness they bring as one gets old.

"The study of your father's life (too short, really) has interested me much. I well remember the cholera years in Fordington; you might have added many details. For instance, every morning a man used to wheel the clothing and bed-linen of those who had died in the night out into the mead, where the Vicar had a large copper set. Some was boiled there, and some burnt. He also had large fires kindled in Mill Street to carry off infection. An excellent plan I should think.

"Many thanks, too, for the volume of poems which duly came. "Apollo at Pherae" seems to me remarkably well constructed in 'plot', and the verse facile: I don't quite know how you could have acquired such readiness at such an early date, and the influence of Milton is not excessive —at least I think not.

"I hope you will let us know when you come this way again."

August. The Collected edition of Hardy's poems was published about this time in two volumes, the first containing the shorter poems, and the second *The Dynasts.*

October. A curious question arose in Hardy's mind

at this date on whether a romancer was morally justified in going to extreme lengths of assurance—after the manner of Defoe—in respect of a tale he knew to be absolutely false. Thirty-seven years earlier, when much pressed to produce something of the nature of a fireside yarn, he had invented a picturesque account of a stealthy nocturnal visit to England by Napoleon in 1804, during the war, to spy out a good spot for invasion. Being struck with the extreme improbability of such a story, he added a circumstantial framework describing it as an old local tradition to blind the reader to the hoax. When it was published he was much surprised at people remarking to him: "I see you have made use of that well-known tradition of Napoleon's landing". He then supposed that, strange as it seemed, such a story must have been in existence without his knowledge, and that perhaps the event had happened. So the matter rested till the time at which we have arrived, when a friend who was interested made inquiries, and was assured by historians and annalists whom he consulted that such a visit would have been fatuous, and wellnigh impossible. Moreover, that there had never existed any such improbable tradition. Hence arose Hardy's aforesaid case of conscience as to being too natural in the art he could practise so well. Had he not long discontinued the writing of romances he would, he said, have put at the beginning of each new one: "Understand that however true this book may be in essence, in fact it is utterly untrue".

Being interested in a dramatic case of piracy on the high seas, which might have happened a hundred or two hundred years before, Hardy and his wife went to the October assizes, on the invitation of Mr. Justice Darling, and sat through the case. Such sensational trials came to quiet Dorset whenever the port of landing was in the county, even if they happened a thousand miles off.

On October 30 the following was written at his request:

"In reply to your letter I write for Mr. Hardy, who is in bed with a chill, to say that he cannot furnish you with any biographical details. . . . To your inquiry if *Jude the Obscure* is autobiographical, I have to answer that there is not a scrap of personal detail in it, it having the least to do with his own life of all his books. The rumour, if it still persists, was started some years ago. Speaking generally, there is more autobiography in a hundred lines of Mr. Hardy's poetry than in all the novels."

It is a tribute to Hardy's powers of presentation that readers would not for many years believe that such incidents as Jude's being smacked when bird-keeping, his driving a baker's cart, his working as a journeyman mason, as also many situations described in verse, were not actual transcripts from the writer's personal experience, although the briefest reference to biographical date-books would have shown the impossibility of anything of the sort.

Hardy had been asked this autumn if he would object to a representation of some of the scenes in *The Dynasts* by the Oxford University Dramatic Society in the following year, and on his making no objection some correspondence ensued with the President and Manager on certain details.

To Mr. Maurice Colbourne.

"*November* 11, 1919.

"Your plan for showing the out-of-doors scenes is very ingenious and attractive—and more elaborate than I imagined, my idea having been just a backcloth coloured greyish-blue, and a floorcloth coloured greenish-grey—a purely conventional representation for all open-air scenes. . . . My feeling was the same as yours about the Strophe and Antistrophe—that they should be unseen, and, as it were, speaking from the sky. But it is, as you hint, doubtful if the two ladies will like to have their charms hidden. Would boys do instead, or ugly ladies with good voices?

But I do not wish to influence largely your methods of presentation. It will be of the greatest interest to me, whether I can get to Oxford for the performance or not, to see how the questions that arise in doing the thing have been grappled with by younger brains than mine."

"*November* 18. To my father's grave (he was born Nov. 18, 1811) with F. [Mrs. Hardy]. The funeral psalm formerly sung at the graveside to the tune of 'St. Stephen' was the xc. in Tate and Brady's version. Whether Dr. Watts's version, beginning 'O God, our help in ages past' —said to be a favourite with Gladstone—was written before or after T. and B.'s (from Coverdale's prose of the same psalm) I don't know, but I think it inferior to the other, which contains some good and concise verse, *e.g.*,

"T. and B.:

> For in Thy sight a thousand years
> Are like a day that's past,
> Or like a watch at dead of night
> Whose hours unnumbered waste.
> Thou sweep'st us off as with a flood,
> We vanish hence like dreams. . . .

"Watts (more diffusely):

> A thousand ages in Thy sight
> Are like an evening gone;
> Short as the watch that ends the night
> Before the rising sun.
> Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
> Bears all its sons away;
> They fly forgotten, as a dream
> Dies at the opening day."

In December Sir George Douglas writes concerning a lecture he is going to give in Edinburgh on Hardy's poems, and incidentally remarks: "Those Aeschylean poems in *The Past and the Present* . . . how would Wordsworth have

regarded them, I wonder, differing so markedly as they do from his view of Nature?" His friend Sir Frederick Pollock also sent a letter containing an impromptu scene of a humorous kind: "Overheard at the sign of the Mermaid in Elysium", purporting to be a conversation between the shades of Shakespeare, Campion, and Heine, "on a book newly received"—(*i.e.* Hardy's Collected Poems)—in which Shakespeare says:

> 'Twas pretty wit, friend Thomas, that you spoke;
> You take the measure of my Stratford folk,

the lines referring to Hardy's poem "To Shakespeare after three hundred years".

In December he opened a village war memorial in the form of a club-room in Bockhampton. It was close to his first school, erected, as has been told, by the manor lady of his early affections, and here he danced, for the last time in his life, with the then lady of the manor. The room was erected almost on the very spot where had stood Robert Reason's shoe-making shop when Hardy was a boy, described in *Under the Greenwood Tree* as "Mr. Robert Penny's".

A speech made by Hardy at the opening of the Bockhampton Reading-room and Club on the 2nd December 1919 was not reported in any newspaper, but the following extracts from it may be of interest:

"I feel it an honour—and an honour of a very interesting kind—to have been asked by your President to open this Club as a memorial to the gallant men of this parish who fought in the last great war—a parish I know so well, and which is only about a mile from my own door.

"This room is, it seems, to be called 'The Mellstock Club'. I fancy I have heard the name of 'Mellstock' before. But we will let that pass. . . .

"The village of Bockhampton has had various owners.

In the time of the Conqueror it belonged to a Norman countess; later to a French Priory; and in the time of Queen Elizabeth to the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, who at the beginning of the last century sold it to Mr. Morton Pitt, a cousin of Pitt the Premier. What a series of scenes does this bare list of owners bring back!

"At one time Bockhampton had a water-mill. Where was that mill, I wonder? It had a wood. Where was that wood?

"To come to my own recollections. From times immemorial the village contained several old Elizabethan houses, with mullioned windows and doors, of Ham Hill stone. They stood by the withy bed. I remember seeing some of them in process of being pulled down, but some were pulled down before I was born. To this attaches a story. Mr. Pitt, by whose orders it was done, came to look on, and asked one of the men several questions as to why he was doing it in such and such a way. Mr. Pitt was notorious for his shabby clothes, and the labourer, who did not know him, said at last, 'Look here, old chap, don't you ask so many questions, and just go on. Anybody would think the house was yours!' Mr. Pitt obeyed orders, and meekly went on, murmuring, 'Well, 'tis mine, after all!'

"Then there were the Poor-houses, I remember—just at the corner turning down to the dairy. These were the homes of the parish paupers before workhouses were built. In one of them lived an old man who was found one day rolling on the floor, with a lot of pence and halfpence scattered round him. They asked him what was the matter, and he said he had heard of people rolling in money, and he thought that for once in his life he would do it, to see what it was like.

"Then there used to be dancing parties at Christmas, and some weeks after. This kind of party was called a Jacob's Join, in which every guest contributed a certain sum to pay the expenses of the entertainment—it was

mostly half-a-crown in this village. They were very lively parties I believe. The curious thing is that the man who used to give the house-room for the dances lived in a cottage which stood exactly where this Club-house stands now—so that when you dance here you will be simply carrying on the tradition of the spot.

"In conclusion, I have now merely to say I declare the Mellstock Club and reading-room to be open."

To a correspondent, on December 30, Hardy writes:

"I am sorry to say that your appeal for a poem that should be worthy of the event of the 8th August 1918 reaches me at too late a time of life to attempt it. . . . The outline of such a poem, which you very cleverly sketch, is striking, and ought to result at the hands of somebody or other who may undertake it, in a literary parallel to the 'Battle of Prague'—a piece of music which ceased to be known long before your time, but was extraordinarily popular in its day—reproducing the crashing of guns nearer and nearer, the groans of the wounded, and the final fulfilment, with great fidelity.

"The length of the late war exhausted me of all my impromptu poems dealing with that tragedy. . . . I quite think that one of our young poets would rise to the occasion if you were to give him the opportunity."

This year went out quietly with Hardy, as is shown by the brief entry: "New Year's Eve. Did not sit up."

CHAPTER XVII

"THE DYNASTS" AT OXFORD; HON. DEGREE; A DEPUTATION; A CONTROVERSY

1920: *Aet.* 79–80

"*January* 19. Coming back from Talbothays by West Stafford Cross I saw Orion upside-down in a pool of water under an oak."

On February 2 Hardy was invited to receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters during the time he was to be in Oxford at the performance of *The Dynasts* at the theatre, which he had promised to attend; and on the 9th he set out by train for Oxford with Mrs. Hardy, though the members of the O.U.D.S. had offered to send a car for him all the way. The day was unusually fine for February, and they were met at the station by enthusiastic representatives of the society, driven round Oxford, and conducted to the house of Sir Walter and Lady Raleigh, who were their hosts.

The next day, after lunching with friends, they went to the Sheldonian and the degree was received.

In presenting Hardy, the Public Orator, Mr. A. D. Godley, made one of the most felicitous of his many excellent speeches. He said:

"Scilicet ut Virgilio nostro sic huic quoque 'molle atque facetum adnuerunt gaudentes rure Camenae'. Hic est, qui divini gloriam ruris sicut nemo alius nostrorum idylliis suis intertexuit: hic est, qui agricolarum sensus et

colloquia ita vivide verbis effinxit ut videre rusticos consessus, ut ipsos inter se sermocinantes, cum legimus, audire videamur. Obruit multos cita oblivio qui in rebus transitoriis versantur: qui insitos animorum sensus et naturae humanae immutabilitatem exprimit, cuius scripta aeternam silvarum et camporum amoenitatem spirant, hunc diu vivum per ora virum volitaturum esse praedicimus. Quid quod idem in poesi quoque eo evasit ut hoc solo scribendi genere, nisi fabularum narratio vel magis suum aliquid et proprium habeat, immortalem famam assequi possit?" [1]

And then, after a reference to the production that evening by the O.U.D.S. of *The Dynasts*—"opus eius tam scriptoris facundia quam rerum quae tractantur magnitudine insignitum" [2]—he concluded:

"Nunc ut homini si quis alius Musis et dis agrestibus amico titulum debitum dando, non tantum illi quantum nobis ipsis decus addatis, duco ad vos senem illustrem Thomam Hardy. . . ." [3]

His wife, Evelyn Gifford, and her sister were present

[1] "Surely as with Virgil, so with him, have the Muses that rejoice in the countryside approved his smoothness and elegance. This is he who has interwoven in his (pastoral) poems, as no other has done, the (heavenly) glory of the (heavenly) countryside: this is he who has portrayed in words the feelings and conversations of rustics so clearly that when we read of them we seem to picture their meetings and hear them discoursing one with another. Speedy forgetfulness overwhelms many who treat of life's fleeting things, but of him who unfolds the inborn feelings of man's soul and the unchangeableness of his nature, whose writings breathe the eternal charm of (the) woods and fields, we foretell that his living fame shall long hover on the lips of men.

"Why now, is not the excellence of his poems such that, by this type of writing alone, he can achieve immortal fame, even if the narration of his stories has not something about them more peculiarly his own?"

[2] "His work marked not only by the eloquence of the author, but by the magnitude of the events which he describes."

[3] "Now that you may confer distinction, not so much on him as on our own selves, by granting a deserved title to one who is a friend of the Muses and pastoral gods, I present to you the revered and renowned Thomas Hardy."

Walter Thomas, photographer. Emery Walker Ltd. photo.

Thomas Hardy, aged 80

among others. Evelyn, daughter of the late Archdeacon Gifford, was his bright and affectionate cousin by marriage, whom Hardy was never to see again. Had he known it when he was parting from her outside the Sheldonian in the rain that afternoon, his heart would have been heavier than it was.

In the afternoon he met the Poet-Laureate (Robert Bridges), Mr. Masefield, and many friends at the Raleighs', and also at the theatre in the evening, from which they did not return till one o'clock—the whole day having been of a most romantic kind.

AN ACCOUNT OF THOMAS HARDY'S COMING TO OXFORD in 1920 to witness a performance of *The Dynasts* by the Oxford University Dramatic Society, and of a later meeting with him in Dorchester when *A Desperate Remedy* was produced there: written in 1929, at Mrs. Hardy's request, by Charles Morgan, who in 1920 was Manager for the O.U.D.S., in 1921 its President, and afterwards dramatic critic of *The Times*.

When the University reassembled after the war, the Oxford University Dramatic Society was in low water. The tradition was broken, the surviving membership was not more than half a dozen, and the treasury was empty. During 1919 new members joined and life began to flicker in the Society, but its future largely depended upon the success or failure of the first annual play in the new series.

An undergraduate was instructed to consider, during the long vacation of 1919, what play should be performed and to report to the Committee. His choice was *The Dynasts*, and he had to defend it against those who objected that it was not Shakespearian and that Shakespeare was a tradition of the Society: and against those more dangerous critics who said that *The Dynasts* would be costly, and, pointing to the balance-sheet, asked whence the money

would come. The financial objection was at last overcome by personal guarantees.

The Committee endorsed the choice, and the Vice-Chancellor, whose special consent was needed for the performance of so modern a work, allowed it. The arguments in its favour were, indeed, unanswerable.

The Dynasts was unique in literature, an epic-drama without predecessor in its own kind. Its writer was a living Englishman: its subject was closely linked with the tragedy in which nearly all the players had lately participated: and, except for those who had seen Granville-Barker's production, it would be a new theatrical experience.

One difficulty remained: the play was copyright, and it seemed to us very probable that Hardy would refuse permission to perform it. He is an old man, we said, and set fast in Dorset; he will not give a fig for what he will call amateur theatricals, nor will he be troubled with our affairs. It was the impression of us all that he would be forbidding and formidable, and he was approached with misgiving. He gave his play to us, not grudgingly nor with any air of patronage, but with so gracious a courtesy that we were made to feel that he was genuinely pleased to find young men eager to perform his work. I do not remember the text of his reply to the original request, but I remember well the impression made by it—an impression increased by his later correspondence. Long before he came to Oxford his individuality had become established among us. Without whittling away his legend by any of the affectations of modesty, he had, by his gentle plainness, banished our fear of it.

Even so, when we invited him and Mrs. Hardy to come to Oxford to see the play, we had little hope that he would accept, for our ideas had overestimated his age —or, rather, underestimated the vigour of it—and his withdrawal into Wessex was believed to be permanent. But he said he would come, and Sir Walter Raleigh invited

him to be his guest. So soon as it was known that he would visit Oxford, everyone perceived what hitherto few had been able to perceive—that, in withholding her highest honour from the author of *The Dynasts* and *The Return of the Native* (perhaps, whispered Cambridge and the world, because he was also the author of *Jude the Obscure*), Christminster was making herself ridiculous. A D.C.L. was offered him. Authority must have sighed with relief when he did not refuse.

It fell to me to meet him at the station. I give my impression of him then and afterwards, not because it is of value as being mine, but for two reasons—first, that Mrs. Hardy has asked it; secondly, that I should dearly love to see some great writer of the past as a contemporary undergraduate saw him. In days to come, even so slight a record as this may have an interest that it cannot now possess.

Hardy made it easy for a young man to be his host—made it easy, not by any loose affability of manner or by a parade of that heartiness which, in too many celebrated men, is a form of patronage, but simply by making no attempt whatever to impress or to startle me. I had not expected cleverness or volubility in him; and his speech was, at first, slight and pleasantly conventional. He introduced me to Mrs. Hardy, asked how long the drive would be to Sir Walter's, used, in brief, the small talk of encounter, giving me time to become accustomed to his presence and to break free of the thought: I must remember this; I shall remember and tell of it when I am an old man. He himself seemed to me prodigiously old, not because there was any failure in his powers—he was, on the contrary, sprightly, alert, bird-like—but because his head had an appearance of being much older than his body, his neck having the thinness and his brow the tightness of great age, and his eyes—so old that age itself seemed to have swung full circle within them—being the eyes of some still young man who had been keeping watch at sea

since the beginning of time. I remember that, sitting opposite him in the cab, I began to think of the sea and to imagine his head appearing above the bridge-ladder of a warship. Then I thought of a bird again, a small bird with a great head. And I made another discovery that pleased me: in external things he was deeply old-fashioned, and, fearing perhaps some assertive, new-fangled conduct in an undergraduate, timid and a little suspicious. I knew at once that I had nothing to fear from an old gentleman who by no means wished to pretend that he was young, and would never embarrass me by forsaking those little formalities of ordinary behaviour to which I myself had been trained.

Thus, because he made no attempt to break it, the ice melted easily and naturally. He asked of the play, saying that it had not been intended for the stage and that he wondered at our having chosen it.

Then, breaking off from this and reminded, I think, by Mrs. Hardy, he said: "We thought we should like to make a little tour of Oxford before going out to the Raleighs'. I don't know it well as it is to-day, and Mrs. Hardy knows it less." He knew it, however, well enough to have planned a route with precision. We drove slowly, stopping now and then when he commanded it, and of each place he spoke in a different tone as if some mood were connected with it. *Jude* was, of course, the inevitable thought of one who had read that book in a midshipman's hammock when to him also Oxford was a beckoning dream. It seemed very strange to be driving solemnly down the High and up the Broad with the author of *Jude*. It seemed strange because, after all, it was so natural. Here was an old man taking a normal and reasonable interest in the place where he was—quietly "seeing the sights" in the fashion of his own time and without the self-consciousness of ours.

But when we are undergraduates we expect writers to

be literary men in all things; we cannot easily dissociate them from their works; and it seemed to me very odd that Thomas Hardy should bother about the Martyrs' Memorial.

When the tour was over, we went forward towards our destination. Hardy began to ask me about the age of undergraduates, and what effect the war had had upon us. I told him that my own war service delivered me from one examination and from compulsory chapels. "Compulsory chapels . . ." said Hardy, and no more; then, opening a little case on the seat beside him and producing from it a handful of small volumes, he asked me if I knew what they were. "Poems", he said, "written by young men. They very kindly send them to me." Very kindly—was there irony in that? But Hardy, reading my thought, dismissed it. He left no doubt that he was glad to have these volumes sent to him, seeing in them a tribute to himself as a poet, not a novelist—and he cared deeply for that. And from this there came to me an opportunity to ask a question that I had been afraid to ask: whether he would ever write another tale? "No," he answered, "I gave it up long ago. I wanted to write poetry in the beginning; now I can. Besides, it is so long since I wrote a novel that novel readers must have forgotten me." And, when I had said something, he added: "No. Much depends on the public expectation. If I wrote a story now, they would want it to be what the old ones were. Besides, my stories are written."

I have no recollection of any conversation after that, nor any picture of Hardy in my mind until, going to Dorchester in 1922 to see the Hardy Players perform a dramatization of *Desperate Remedies*, I was invited by him to Max Gate, where we sat round the fire after tea and he told me of his early days in London, and how he would go to Shakespearian plays with the text in his hands and, seated in the front row, follow the dialogue by the stage

light. He told me, too, that he had written a stage version of *Tess*, and something of its early history; how, after the success of the novel, the great ones of the earth had pressed him to dramatize it; how he had done so, and the play had been prepared for the stage; by what mischance the performance of it had been prevented. Where was it now?

In a drawer. Would he allow it to be performed? He smiled, gave no answer, and began at once to talk of criticism—first of dramatic criticism which, he said, in the few newspapers that took it seriously was better than literary criticism, the dramatic critics having less time "to rehearse their prejudices"; then of literary criticism itself—a subject on which he spoke with a bitterness that surprised me. The origin of this bitterness was in the past where, I believe, there was indeed good reason for it, but it was directed now against contemporary critics of his own work, and I could not understand what general reason he had to complain of them. He used no names; he spoke with studied reserve, sadly rather than querulously; but he was persuaded—and there is evidence of this persuasion in the preface to the posthumous volume of his verse—that critics approached his work with an ignorant prejudice against his "pessimism" which they allowed to stand in the way of fair reading and fair judgement.

This was a distortion of facts as I knew them. It was hard to believe that Hardy honestly thought that his genius was not recognized; harder to believe that he thought his work was not read. Such a belief indicated the only failure of balance, the only refusal to seek the truth, which I perceived in Hardy, and I was glad when the coming of a visitor, who was, I think, secretary of the Society of Dorset Men, led him away from criticism to plainer subjects. When the time came for me to go, seeing that he proposed to come out with me, I tried to restrain him, for the night was cold; but he was determined, and Mrs. Hardy

followed her own wise course of matching her judgement with his vitality. So he came down among the trees to the dark road, and I saw the last of him standing outside his gate with a lantern swaying in his hand. I shall not know a greater man, nor have I ever known one who had, in the same degree, Hardy's power of drawing reverence towards affection.

He was not simple; he had the formal subtlety peculiar to his own generation; there was something deliberately "ordinary" in his demeanour which was a concealment of extraordinary fires—a method of self-protection common enough in my grandfather's generation, though rare now.

There are many who might have thought him unimpressive because he was content to be serious and determined to be unspectacular. But his was the kind of character to which I lay open. He was an artist, proud of his art, who yet made no parade of it; he was a traditionalist and, therefore, suspicious of fashion; he had that sort of melancholy, the absence of which in any man has always seemed to me to be a proclamation of blindness.

There was in him something timid as well as something fierce, as if the world had hurt him and he expected it to hurt him again. But what fascinated me above all was the contrast between the plainness, the quiet rigidity of his behaviour, and the passionate boldness of his mind, for this I had always believed to be the tradition of English genius, too often and too extravagantly denied.

To Mr. Joseph McCabe, who wrote proposing to include Hardy in a Biographical Dictionary of Modern Rationalists.

"*February* 18, 1920.

"DEAR SIR,

"As Mr. Hardy has a cold which makes writing trying to his eyes, I answer your letter for him. He says he thinks he is rather an irrationalist than a rationalist, on account

of his inconsistencies. He has, in fact, declared as much in prefaces to some of his poems, where he explains his views as being mere impressions that frequently change. Moreover, he thinks he could show that no man is a rationalist, and that human actions are not ruled by reason at all in the last resort. But this, of course, is outside the question. So that he cannot honestly claim to belong to the honourable body you are including in your dictionary, whom he admires for their straightforward sincerity and permanent convictions, though he does not quite think they can claim their title.

"Yours very truly,

"F. E. HARDY."

On March 7, 1920, Hardy writes to an old friend of nearly fifty years' standing, Mr. John Slater, F.R.I.B.A.:

". . . As to your question whether I should like to be nominated as an Hon. Fellow of the R.I.B.A., I really don't know what to say. Age has naturally made me, like Gallio, care for none of these things, at any rate very much, especially as I am hardly ever in London. But at the same time I am very conscious of the honour of such a proposition, and like to be reminded in such a way that I once knew what a T-square was. So, shall I leave the decision to your judgement?"

Hardy was duly nominated and elected, and it was a matter of regret to him that he could not attend the meetings of the Institute, held still in the same old room in Conduit Street in which he had received the prize medal for his essay in 1863 from the hands of Sir Gilbert Scott. Mr. John Slater was almost the only surviving friend of Hardy's architectural years in London since the death of Arthur Blomfield.

"*March* 25. Joined National Committee for acquiring Wentworth Place—the house once occupied by John Keats."

"*April* 7. A would-be author, not without humour, writing from South Africa for a 'foreword' from me, adds: 'Mr. Balfour when writing asked me not to use his remarks, mentioning the number of books sent him from all parts of the world (for forewords). But mental dexterity greatly inferior to yours, Sir, could contrive to do somewhat, and yet avoid the consequences contemplated'—*i.e.* multitudes of other would-be novelists asking the same favour."

"*April* 21. Went with F. to St. Margaret's, Westminster, to the wedding of Harold Macmillan and Lady Dorothy Cavendish. Sat with Lord Morley, and signed as one of the witnesses. Morley, seeing Bryce close by us, and the Duke of Devonshire near, whispered to F., 'Which weigh most, three O.M.'s or one Duke?"

This was Hardy's last visit to London. He, with his wife, stayed for two nights only at J. M. Barrie's flat, so near the house in Adelphi Terrace where he had worked as an architect's assistant nearly sixty years before.

"*May* 14. Motored with F. and K. to Exeter. Called on the Granville-Barkers at Sidmouth. Cathedral service: the beautiful anthem 'God is gone up' (Croft). Well sung. Psalms to Walker in E flat. Felt I should prefer to be a cathedral organist to anything in the world. 'Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work, claiming each slave of the sound.' A fine May day."

At the end of May a letter came from C. W. Moule in reply to Hardy's note of sympathy on his loss of his only remaining brother, Handley, the Bishop of Durham, with whom Hardy had had occasion to correspond the year before. As it was the last letter Hardy received from his correspondent, who himself passed away within the next year, the following passages are quoted:

"In condolence 'the half is more than the whole', as the wise Greek paradox saith (πλέον ἥμισυ παντός). . . . Your friendly acceptance of those stanzas was answered by me, but that in which you told me that dear Horace was

one of 'The Five Students' in *Moments of Vision* I fear was never answered. . . . I did not know of Handley's nearness in age to your sister Mary (they were only two days apart), nor did I know that your mother and mine knew each other well enough to compare notes on the point. . . . I am glad you saw him at Max Gate. We wish that we could see you here. I may try to send you some book in memoriam H. C. G. M. . . . 'Not one is there among us that understandeth any more', as a snapshot of the current generation, is worthy of you." [Hardy had quoted the words from the 74th Psalm in the letter to which this was an answer, alluding probably to the memories familiar to all three.]

On June 2nd of this year came Hardy's eightieth birthday, and he received a deputation from the Society of Authors, consisting of Mr. Augustine Birrell, Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins, and Mr. John Galsworthy. The occasion was a pleasant one, and the lunch lively. Many messages were received during the day, including one from the King, the Lord Mayor of London, the Cambridge Vice-Chancellor, and the Prime Minister.

Hardy pencilled down the following as "Birthday notes":

"When, like the Psalmist, 'I call mine own ways to remembrance', I find nothing in them that quite justifies this celebration.

"The value of old age depends upon the person who reaches it. To some men of early performance it is useless. To others, who are late to develop, it just enables them to complete their job.

"We have visited two cathedrals during the last month, and I could not help feeling that if men could get a little more of the reposefulness and peace of those buildings into their lives how much better it would be for them.

"Nature's indifference to the advance of her species along what we are accustomed to call civilized lines makes

the late war of no importance to her, except as a sort of geological fault in her continuity.

"Though my life, like the lives of my contemporaries, covers a period of more material advance in the world than any of the same length can have done in other centuries, I do not find that real civilization has advanced equally. People are not more humane, so far as I can see, than they were in the year of my birth. Disinterested kindness is less. The spontaneous goodwill that used to characterize manual workers seems to have departed. One day of late a railway porter said to a feeble old lady, a friend of ours, 'See to your luggage yourself'. Human nature had not sunk so low as that in 1840.

"If, as has been lately asserted, only the young and feeble League of Nations stands between us and the *utter destruction of Civilization*, it makes one feel he would rather be old than young. For a person whose chief interest in life has been the literary art—poetry in particular—the thought is depressing that, should such an overturn arrive, poetry will be the first thing to go, probably not to revive again for many centuries. Anyhow, it behoves young poets and other writers to endeavour to stave off such a catastrophe."

Among others who remembered his birthday, Mr. John Lane sent a glass goblet which had come into his possession many years before, remarking, . . . "no doubt it was intended as a gift for you from some fair but probably shy admirer"; to which Hardy replied:

"Alas, for the mysterious goblet inscribed to the mysterious namesake of mine. He must, or may, have been a jockey from the diagrams. . . . Anyhow, no woman ever took the trouble to inscribe her love for me on a cup of crystal—of that you may be sure; and it is best on the whole to leave the history of the glass in vague uncertainty."

The next week J. M. Barrie came to Max Gate on a visit, and in July Hardy and his wife were motoring about

Dorset, showing some features of the county to their friend Mrs. Arthur Henniker, who was staying at Weymouth, and at that time had ideas of buying a house in the neighbourhood. He was also engaged in further correspondence on the scheme of establishing a South-western University at Exeter.

To Mr. G. Herbert Thring.

"*August* 23, 1920.

"The address from the Members of the Council, representing the Society of Authors all, has reached me safely, and though I knew its contents—its spiritual part—on my actual birthday when the deputation came here, I did not realize its bodily beauty till now.

"As to the address itself, I can only confirm by this letter what I told the deputation by word of mouth—how much I have been moved by such a mark of good feeling—affection as I may truly call it—in the body of writers whose President I have had the distinction of being for many years—a do-nothing President, a *roi-fainéant*, I very greatly fear, in spite of their assurances! However, the Society has been good enough to take me as worth this tribute, and I thank them heartily for it and what it expresses. It will be a cheering reminder of bright things whenever I see it or think of it, which will be often and often."

"*September* 6. Death of Evelyn Gifford, at Arlington House, Oxford. Dear Evelyn! whom I last parted from in apparently perfect health." She was the daughter of Dr. Gifford, who married Margaret Jeune, and the poem "Evelyn G. of Christminster" was written on this occasion.

"*November* 11. Hardy's poem "And there was a great calm" appeared in *The Times* Armistice Supplement.

The request to write this poem had been brought to him from London by one of the editorial staff. At first

Hardy was disinclined, and all but refused, being generally unable to write to order. In the middle of the night, however, an idea seized him, and he was heard moving about the house looking things up. The poem was duly written and proved worthy of the occasion.

On the 13th the Dorchester Amateurs performed *The Return of the Native* in Dorchester, as dramatized by Mr. Tilley.

"More interested than I expected to be. The dancing was just as it used to be at Higher Bockhampton in my childhood."

In declining to become a Vice-President of a well-known Society, Hardy writes:

"I may be allowed to congratulate its members upon their wise insistence on the word 'English' as the name of this country's people, and in not giving way to a few short-sighted clamourers for the vague, unhistoric and pinchbeck title of 'British' by which they would fain see it supplanted."

Towards the end of the year Hardy was occupied with the following interesting correspondence:

To Mr. Alfred Noyes.

"DORCHESTER, 13*th December* 1920.

"DEAR MR. NOYES,

"Somebody has sent me an article from the *Morning Post* of December 9 entitled 'Poetry and Religion', which reports you as saying, in a lecture, that mine is 'a philosophy which told them (readers) that the Power behind the Universe was an imbecile jester'.

"As I hold no such 'philosophy', and, to the best of my recollection, never could have done so, I should be glad if you would inform me whereabouts I have seriously asserted such to be my opinion.

"Yours truly,

"TH. HARDY."

It should be stated that Mr. Noyes had always been a friendly critic of Hardy's writings, and one with whom he was on good terms, which was probably Hardy's reason for writing to him, who would be aware there was no personal antagonism in his letter.

Mr. Noyes replied that he was sorry the abbreviated report of his address did not contain the tribute he had paid Hardy as a writer with artistic mastery and at the head of living authors, although he did disagree with his pessimistic philosophy; a philosophy which, in his opinion, led logically to the conclusion that the Power behind the Universe was malign; and he referred to various passages in Hardy's poems that seemed to bear out his belief that their writer held the views attributed to him in the lecture; offering, however, to revise it when reprinted, if he had misinterpreted the aforesaid passages.

To Mr. Alfred Noyes.

"*December 19th*, 1920.

"I am much obliged for your reply, which I really ought not to have troubled you to write. I may say for myself that I very seldom do give critics such trouble, usually letting things drift, though there have been many occasions when a writer who has been so much abused for his opinions as I have been would perhaps have done well not to hold his peace.

"I do not know that there can be much use in my saying more than I did say. It seems strange that I should have to remind a man of letters of what, I should have supposed, he would have known as well as I—of the very elementary rule of criticism that a writer's works should be judged as a whole, and not from picked passages that contradict them as a whole—and this especially when they are scattered over a period of fifty years.

"Also that I should have to remind him of the vast

difference between the expression of fancy and the expression of belief. My imagination may have often run away with me; but all the same, my sober opinion—so far as I have any definite one—of the Cause of Things, has been defined in scores of places, and is that of a great many ordinary thinkers: that the said Cause is neither moral nor immoral, but *un*moral: 'loveless and hateless' I have called it, 'which neither good nor evil knows'—etc., etc.—(you will find plenty of these definitions in *The Dynasts* as well as in short poems, and I am surprised that you have not taken them in). This view is quite in keeping with what you call a Pessimistic philosophy (a mere nickname with no sense in it), which I am quite unable to see as 'leading logically to the conclusion that the Power behind the universe is malign'.

"In my fancies, or poems of the imagination, I have of course called this Power all sorts of names—never supposing they would be taken for more than fancies. I have even in prefaces warned readers to take them as such—as mere impressions of the moment, exclamations in fact. But it has always been my misfortune to presuppose a too intelligent reading public, and no doubt people will go on thinking that I really believe the Prime Mover to be a malignant old gentleman, a sort of King of Dahomey—an idea which, so far from my holding it, is to me irresistibly comic. 'What a fool one must have been to write for such a public!' is the inevitable reflection at the end of one's life.

"The lines you allude to, 'A Young Man's Epigram', dated 1866, I remember finding in a drawer, and printed them merely as an amusing instance of early cynicism. The words 'Time's Laughingstocks' are legitimate imagery all of a piece with such expressions as 'Life, Time's fool', and thousands in poetry and I am amazed that you should see any *belief* in them. The other verses you mention, 'New Year's Eve', 'His Education', are the same fanciful

impressions of the moment. The poem called 'He abjures Love', ending with 'And then the curtain', is a love-poem, and lovers are chartered irresponsibles. A poem often quoted against me, and apparently in your mind in the lecture, is the one called 'Nature's Questioning', containing the words, 'some Vast Imbecility', etc.—as if these definitions were my creed. But they are merely enumerated in the poem as fanciful alternatives to several others, having nothing to do with my own opinion. As for 'The Unborn', to which you allude, though the form of it is imaginary, the sentiment is one which I should think, especially since the war, is not uncommon or unreasonable.

"This week I have had sent me a review which quotes a poem entitled 'To my Father's Violin', containing a Virgilian reminiscence of mine of Acheron and the Shades. The writer comments: 'Truly this pessimism is insupportable. . . . One marvels that Hardy is not in a madhouse'. Such is English criticism, and I repeat, why did I ever write a line! And perhaps if the young ladies to whom you lectured really knew that, so far from being the wicked personage they doubtless think me at present to be, I am a harmless old character much like their own grandfathers, they would consider me far less romantic and attractive."

Mr. Noyes in a further interesting letter, after reassuring Hardy that he would correct any errors, gave his own views, one of which was that he had "never been able to conceive a Cause of Things that could be less in any respect than the things caused". To which Hardy replied:

"Many thanks for your letter. The Scheme of Things is, indeed, incomprehensible; and there I suppose we must leave it—perhaps for the best. Knowledge might be terrible."

To the "New York World".

"*December* 23, 1920.

"Yes I approve of international disarmament, on the lines indicated by the *New York World*."

The following letter, written to someone about December 1920, obviously refers to his correspondence with Mr. Noyes:

"A friend of mine writes objecting to what he calls my 'philosophy' (though I have no philosophy—merely what I have often explained to be only a confused heap of impressions, like those of a bewildered child at a conjuring show). He says he has never been able to conceive a Cause of Things that could be less in any respect than the thing caused. This apparent impossibility to him, and to so many, is very likely owing to his running his head against a *Single* Cause, and perceiving no possible other. But if he would discern that what we call the first Cause should be called First Causes, his difficulty would be lessened. Assume a thousand unconscious causes—lumped together in poetry as one Cause, or God—and bear in mind that a coloured liquid can be produced by the mixture of colourless ones, a noise by the juxtaposition of silences, etc., etc., and you see that the assumption that intelligent beings arise from the combined action of unintelligent forces is sufficiently probable for imaginative writing, and I have never attempted scientific. It is my misfortune that people *will* treat all my mood-dictated writing as a single scientific theory."

About Christmas the song entitled "When I set out for Lyonnesse" was published as set to music by Mr. Charles A. Speyer. It was one of his own poems that Hardy happened to like, and he was agreeably surprised that it should be liked by anybody else, his experience being that

an author's preference for particular verses of his own was usually based on the circumstances that gave rise to them, and not on their success as art.

On Christmas night the carol singers and mummers came to Max Gate as they had promised, the latter performing the *Play of Saint George*, just as he had seen it performed in his childhood. On the last day of the old year a poem by Hardy called "At the Entering of the New Year" appeared in the *Athenæum*.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME FAREWELLS

1921–1925: *Aet.* 80–85

THE New Year found Hardy sitting up to hear the bells, which he had not done for some time.

Early in January he was searching through registers of Stinsford for records of a family named Knight, connected with his own. Many generations of this family are buried in nameless graves in Stinsford Churchyard.

J. M. Barrie paid him a brief visit on May 11, staying at Max Gate for one night, and visiting Hardy's birthplace at Bockhampton on the morning of May 12. The same day Hardy learned of the death of a friend, an elder brother of the confidant and guide of his youth and early manhood. In his note-book he writes:

"*May* 11. Charles Moule died. He is the last of 'the seven brethren'."

On June 2 he notes that his birthday was remembered by the newspapers, and that he received an address from younger writers. Accompanying this was a fine copy of the first edition of "Lamia", "Isabella", "The Eve of St. Agnes", and other poems by John Keats, in the original boards with the half-title and eight pages of advertisements.

The idea had originated with Mr. St. John Ervine, who summoned a committee to consider the nature of the tribute. The address was signed by a hundred and six younger writers, and ran as follows:

"Dear Mr. Hardy,

"We, who are your younger comrades in the craft of letters, wish on this your eighty-first birthday to do honour to ourselves by praising your work, and to thank you for the example of high endeavour and achievement which you have set before us. In your novels and poems you have given us a tragic vision of life which is informed by your knowledge of character and relieved by the charity of your humour, and sweetened by your sympathy with human suffering and endurance. We have learned from you that the proud heart can subdue the hardest fate, even in submitting to it. . . . In all that you have written you have shown the spirit of man, nourished by tradition and sustained by pride, persisting through defeat.

"You have inspired us both by your work and by the manner in which it was done. The craftsman in you calls for our admiration as surely as the artist, and few writers have observed so closely as you have the Host's instruction in the *Canterbury Tales*:

> "Your tarmes, your colours, and your figures,
> Keep them in store, till so be ye indite
> High style, as when that men to kinges write.

"From your first book to your last, you have written in the 'high style, as when that men to kinges write', and you have crowned a great prose with a noble poetry.

"We thank you, Sir, for all that you have written . . . but most of all, perhaps, for *The Dynasts*.

"We beg that you will accept the copy of the first edition of *Lamia* by John Keats which accompanies this letter, and with it, accept also our grateful homage."

A few days later, on June 9, he motored to Sturminster Newton with his wife and Mr. Cecil Hanbury to see a performance of *The Mellstock Quire* by the Hardy Players in the Castle ruins. Afterwards he went to River-

side, the house where he had written *The Return of the Native*, and where the Players were then having tea.

On June 16 Mr. de la Mare arrived for a visit of two nights. The following day he walked to Stinsford with Hardy and was much interested in hearing about the various graves, and in reading a poem that Hardy had just lately written, "Voices from Things growing in a Country Churchyard". The first verse of the poem runs thus:

> These flowers are I, poor Fanny Hurd,
> Sir or Madam,
> A little girl here sepultured.
> Once I flit-fluttered like a bird
> Above the grass, as now I wave
> In daisy shapes above my grave,
> All day cheerily,
> All night eerily!

Fanny Hurd's real name was Fanny Hurden, and Hardy remembered her as a delicate child who went to school with him. She died when she was about eighteen, and her grave and a head-stone with her name are to be seen in Stinsford Churchyard. The others mentioned in this poem were known to him by name and repute.

Early in July a company of film actors arrived in Dorchester for the purpose of preparing a film of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Hardy met them outside The King's Arms, the hotel associated with the novel. Although the actors had their faces coloured yellow and were dressed in the fashion of some eighty years earlier, Hardy observed, to his surprise, that the townsfolk passed by on their ordinary affairs and seemed not to notice the strange spectacle, nor did any interest seem aroused when Hardy drove through the town with the actors to Maiden Castle, that ancient earthwork which formed the background to one part of the film.

About this time he went to St. Peter's Church, to a morn-

ing service, for the purpose of hearing sung by the choir the morning hymn, "Awake my Soul", to Barthélémon's setting. This had been arranged for him by Dr. Niven, the Rector of St. Peter's. Church music, as has been shown, had appealed strongly to Hardy from his earliest years. On July 23 a sonnet, "Barthélémon at Vauxhall", appeared in *The Times*. He had often imagined the weary musician, returning from his nightly occupation of making music for a riotous throng, lingering on Westminster Bridge to see the rising sun and being thence inspired to the composition of music to be heard hereafter in places very different from Vauxhall.

In the same month he opened a bazaar in aid of the Dorset County Hospital, and in the evening of that day he was driven into Dorchester again to see some dancing in the Borough Gardens. Of this he writes:

"Saw 'The Lancers' danced (for probably the last time) at my request. Home at 10: outside our gate full moon over cottage: band still heard playing."

At the beginning of September Hardy stood sponsor at the christening of the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Hanbury of Kingston Maurward. His gift to his little godchild was the manuscript of a short poem contained in a silver box. This appeared afterwards in *Human Shows* under the title "To C. F. H.".

Three days later he was again at Stinsford Church, attending the evening service. In his notebook he records: "A beautiful evening. Evening Hymn Tallis."

During the latter half of September Hardy was sitting to his friend Mr. Ouless for his portrait, which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. On October 14 he received a visit from Mr. and Mrs. John Masefield, who brought with them a gift: a full-rigged ship made by John Masefield himself. This ship had been named by its maker *The Triumph*, and was much valued by Hardy, who showed

"I sometimes think"

(For F. E. H.)

I sometimes think as here I sit
Of things I have done,
Which seemed in doing not unfit
To face the sun:
Yet never a soul ~~was~~ has paused a whit
On such – not one.

There was that eager strenuous press
To sow good seed;
There was that saving from distress
In the ~~hour~~ nick of need;
There were those words in the wilderness:
Who cared to heed?

Yet can this be full true, or ~~is~~ no?
For one did care,
And, spiriting into my house, to, fro,
Like wind on the stair,
Cares still, heeds all, & will, even though
I may despair.

Facsimile reproduction from page of original MS. of *Late Lyrics and Earlier*.

it with pride to callers at Max Gate, with the story of how it arrived. Four days later Hardy writes:

"*October* 18. In afternoon to Stinsford with F. A matchless October: sunshine, mist and turning leaves."

The first month of 1922 found him writing an energetic preface to a volume of poems entitled *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, the MS. of which he forwarded to the publishers on January 23. Some of his friends regretted this preface, thinking that it betrayed an oversensitiveness to criticism which it were better the world should not know. But sensitiveness was one of Hardy's chief characteristics, and without it his poems would never have been written, nor indeed, the greatest of his novels. He used to say that it was not so much the force of the blow that counted, as the nature of the material that received the blow.

An interesting point in this preface was his attitude towards religion. Through the years 1920 to 1925 Hardy was interested in conjectures on rationalizing the English Church. There had been rumours for some years of a revised Liturgy, and his hopes were accordingly raised by the thought of making the Established Church comprehensive enough to include the majority of thinkers of the previous hundred years who had lost all belief in the supernatural.

When the new Prayer Book appeared, however, his hopes were doomed to disappointment, and he found that the revision had not been in a rationalistic direction, and from that time he lost all expectation of seeing the Church representative of modern thinking minds.

In April J. M. Barrie stayed at Max Gate for one night. The 23rd May saw the publication of *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, and on the following day Hardy motored to Sturminster Newton to call at the house where he had spent some of the early years of his first marriage, and where he

wrote *The Return of the Native*. Two days later he notes: "Visited Stinsford and Higher Bockhampton. House at the latter shabby, and garden. Just went through into heath, and up plantation to top of garden." It was becoming increasingly painful to Hardy to visit this old home of his, and often when he left he said that he would go there no more.

On May 29 he copied some old notes made before he had contemplated writing *The Dynasts*.

"We—the people—Humanity, a collective personality —(Thus 'we' could be engaged in the battle of Hohenlinden, say, and in the battle of Waterloo)—dwell with genial humour on 'our' getting into a rage for we knew not what.

"The intelligence of this collective personality Humanity is pervasive, ubiquitous, like that of God. Hence *e.g.* on the one hand we could hear the roar of the cannon, discern the rush of the battalions, on the other hear the voice of a man protesting, etc.

"Title 'self-slaughter'; 'divided against ourselves'.

"Now these 3 (or 3000) whirling through space at the rate of 40 miles a second—(God's view). 'Some of our family who' (the we of one nation speaking of the 'we' of another).

"A battle. Army as somnambulists—not knowing what it is for.

"We were called 'Artillery' etc. 'We were so under the spell of habit that' (drill).

"It is now necessary to call the reader's attention to those of us who were harnessed and collared in blue and brass. . . .

"*Poem*—the difference between what things are and what they ought to be. (Stated as by a god to the gods—*i.e.* as God's story.)

"*Poem*—I—First Cause, omniscient, not omnipotent —limitations, difficulties, etc., from being only able to work by Law (His only failing is lack of foresight).

"We will now ask the reader to look eastward with us . . . at what the contingent of us out that way were doing.

"*Poem.* A spectral force seen acting in a man (*e.g.* Napoleon) and he acting under it—a pathetic sight—this compulsion.

"Patriotism, if aggressive and at the expense of other countries, is a vice; if in sympathy with them, a virtue."

From these notes it will be seen how *The Dynasts* had been slowly developing in his mind. Unfortunately they are not dated, but there is in existence a notebook filled with details of the Napoleonic wars, and reflection upon them, having been written at the time he was gathering material for *The Trumpet-Major*, which was first published in 1880.

During July Hardy had visits from many friends. Florence Henniker came early in the month, and went for a delightful drive with him and his wife in Blackmore Vale, and to Sherborne, the scene of *The Woodlanders*. Later Siegfried Sassoon arrived with Edmund Blunden, and then E. M. Forster, who accompanied him to an amateur performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on the lawn of Trinity Rectory.

In August he was well enough to cycle (no small feat for a man of eighty-two) with his wife to Talbothays to visit his brother and his sister.

On August 11 he writes in his notebook:

"Motored to Sturminster Newton, and back by Dogbury Gate. Walked to top of High Stoy with Flower (probably for the last time), thence back home. A beautiful drive."

"*October* 12. Walked across Boucher's Close to Ewelease Stile." [Boucher's Close is a green-wooded meadow next to Stinsford Vicarage, and the Ewelease Stile is the one whereon, more than fifty years before this date, he

had sat and read the review of *Desperate Remedies* in the *Spectator*.]

On the same day Hardy wrote to J. H. Morgan as follows:

"Dear General Morgan,

"I had already begun a reply to your interesting letter from Berlin, which opened up so many points that had engaged me 20 years ago, but had rather faded in my memory. Now that you are at home I will write it in a more succinct form, for it is not likely that amid the many details you have to attend to after your absence you will want to think much about Napoleonic times.

"I cannot for my life recall where I obtained the idea of N's entry into Berlin by the Potsdamer-strasse, though I don't think I should have written it without authority. However, you have to remember that the events generally in *The Dynasts* had to be pulled together into dramatic scenes, to show themselves to the mental eye of the reader as a picture viewed from one point; and hence it was sometimes necessary to see round corners, down crooked streets, and to shift buildings nearer each other than in reality (as Turner did in his landscapes); and it may possibly happen that I gave 'A Public Place' in Berlin these convenient facilities without much ceremony.

"You allude to Leipzig. That battle bothered me much more than Jena or Ulm (to which you also allude)—in fact more than any other battle I had to handle. I defy any human being to synchronize with any certainty its episodes from descriptions by historians. My time-table was, I believe, as probable a one as can be drawn up at this date. But I will go no further with these stale conjectures, now you are in London.

"I have quite recently been reading a yellow old letter written from Berlin in June, 1815, by a Dorset man whose daughter is a friend of ours, and who lately sent it to me. The writer says what is oddly in keeping with your re-

marks on the annoyance of Prussian officers. 'Buonaparte has rendered Germany completely military; at the inns and post-houses a private Gentleman exacts not half the respect exacted by a soldier. This contempt for those who wear no swords displays itself in no very pleasant shape to travellers. About 3 weeks ago I might have died of damp sheets if my German servant had not taken upon him to assure a brute of a Post-master that I was an English General travelling for my health. . . . I have since girded on a sabre, got a military cap, and let my moustache grow: soldiers now present arms as we pass.'

"It would be strange to find that Napoleon was really the prime cause of German militarism! What a Nemesis for the French nation!

"Well, I have gone back to Boney again after all: but no more of him. I hope you find the change to London agreeable, and keep well in your vicissitudes.

"Sincerely yours,

"THOMAS HARDY."

Early in November he was visited by Mrs. Henry Allhusen, his friend from her girlhood, when she was Miss Dorothy Stanley, daughter of Lady Jeune, afterwards Lady St. Helier. With Mrs. Allhusen and her daughter Elizabeth he motored to Dogbury Gate and other beautiful parts of Dorset. Elizabeth Allhusen, a charming girl, died soon after, to Hardy's grief.

A few days later came a letter from the Pro-Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, to say that it had been decided to elect him to an Honorary Fellowship, which he accepted, an announcement to that effect being made in *The Times* on the 20th of the month.

Another entry in his notebook:

"*November* 27. E's death-day, ten years ago. Went with F. and tidied her tomb and carried flowers for her and the other two tombs."

"*New Year's Eve.* Henry and Kate came to 1 o'clock dinner, stayed to tea, left 5.30. Did not sit up."

Early in January 1923 Hardy was appointed Governor of the Dorchester Grammar School for three years.

"*February* 26. A story (rather than a poem) might be written in the first person, in which 'I' am supposed to live through the centuries in my ancestors, in one person, the particular line of descent chosen being that in which *qualities* are most continuous." (From an old note.)

A few days after this entry is the following:

"*April* 5. In to-day's *Times*:

'Henniker.—on the 4th April 1923, of heart failure, the Honourable Mrs. Arthur Henniker. R.I.P.'

"After a friendship of 30 years!"

"*April* 10. F. Henniker buried to-day at 1 o'clock at Thornham Magna, Eye, Suffolk."

During the month of April Hardy finished the rough draft of his poetical play *The Queen of Cornwall*, and in May he made, with infinite care, his last drawing, an imaginary view of Tintagel Castle. This is delicately drawn, an amazing feat for a man in his eighty-third year, and it indicates his architectural tastes and early training. It was used as an illustration when *The Queen of Cornwall* was published.

In April, replying to a letter from Mr. John Galsworthy, he writes:

". . . The exchange of international thought is the only possible salvation for the world: and though I was decidedly premature when I wrote at the beginning of the South African War that I hoped to see patriotism not confined to realms, but circling the earth, I still maintain that such sentiments ought to prevail.

"Whether they will do so before the year 10,000 is of course what sceptics may doubt."

Towards the end of May Mr. and Mrs. Walter de la Mare stayed at Max Gate for two nights, and early in

June, the day after Hardy's birthday, Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker came to see him, bringing with them friends he had not seen for many years, Mr. and Mrs. Max Beerbohm.

"*June* 10. Relativity. That things and events always were, are, and will be (*e.g.* Emma, Mother and Father are living still in the past)."

"*June* 21. Went with F. on board the *Queen Elizabeth* on a visit to Sir John de Robeck, Lady de Robeck, and Admiral W. W. Fisher." More than once, upon the invitation of Admiral Fisher, he had had a pleasant time on board a battleship off Portland.

On June 25 Hardy and his wife went to Oxford by road to stay at Queen's College for two nights. This was the last long journey that Hardy was to make, and the last time that he was to sleep away from Max Gate. It was a delightful drive, by way of Salisbury, Hungerford, and Wantage. At Salisbury they stopped for a little while to look at the Cathedral, as Hardy always loved doing, and at various old buildings, including the Training College which he had visited more than fifty years before when his two sisters were students there, and which is faithfully described in *Jude the Obscure*.

They paused also at Fawley, that pleasant Berkshire village described in the same novel under the name of Marygreen. Here some of Hardy's ancestors were buried, and he searched fruitlessly for their graves in the little churchyard. His father's mother, the gentle, kindly grandmother who lived with the family at Bockhampton during Hardy's childhood, had spent the first thirteen years of her life here as an orphan child, named Mary Head, and her memories of Fawley were so poignant that she never cared to return to the place after she had left it as a young girl. The surname of Jude was taken from this place.

So well had their journey been timed that on their

arrival at Oxford they found awaiting them under the entrance gateway of Queen's, Mr. Godfrey Elton, who was to be their cicerone, and whose impressions of their visit are given herewith.

"Having been elected an Honorary Fellow Hardy paid Queen's College a visit on June 25th and 26th, just after the end of the summer term of 1923. With a colleague, Dr. Chattaway, I was delighted to meet him at the College gate—he was to come by road with Mrs. Hardy from Dorchester. Neither Chattaway nor I had met Hardy before, but I felt confident that we should recognise the now legendary figure from his portraits. It was almost like awaiting a visit from Thackeray or Dickens. . . .

"The car arrived punctually, and a smallish, fragile, bright-eyed man, elderly certainly but as certainly not old, climbed out of it. An elderly gentleman, one would have said, who had always lived in the country and knew much of the ways of wild creatures and crops. . . .

"We left Mr. and Mrs. Hardy at tea in the Provost's lodgings. The Provost was only one year Mr. Hardy's senior, but with his patriarchal white beard appeared a great deal older, and as we left the party—Hardy sitting bright-eyed and upright on the edge of his chair—it seemed almost like leaving a new boy in charge of his headmaster. . . . Next day there was a lunch in Common-room, at which the Fellows and their wives met Mr. and Mrs. Hardy, and a photograph in the Fellows' garden in which Hardy appeared in his Doctor's gown with his new colleagues. In the morning he was shown the sights of the College. He was obviously happy to be in Oxford, and happy, I think, too, to be of it, and I wished that it had been term-time and that he could have seen the younger life of the place, which one felt in some ways he would have preferred to Tutors and Professors. We took him round College a trifle too fast. He would pause reflectively before Garrick's copy of the First Folio or the contemporary portrait of Henry

V., and seem about to make some comment when his conductors would be passing on again and some new historical information would be being offered him. It was characteristic of him that in some pause in this perambulation he found occasion to say some kind words to me of some youthful verse of mine he had chanced to see. . . . Afterwards he asked me to take him into the High Street to see the famous curve, and we spent some minutes searching for the precise spot from which it can best be viewed, while in my mind memories of *Jude the Obscure* and an earlier Oxford conflicted with anxieties as to the traffic of the existing town—to which he seemed quite indifferent. Then, apparently unwearied, he asked for the Shelley Memorial....

"After this came the Common-room lunch, and afterwards Mrs. Hardy invited me to accompany them on a visit to the Masefields. We drove to Boar's Hill, paying a visit in Christ Church on the way. Had it not been for my constant consciousness that I was sitting before a Classic, I should not have guessed that I was with a man who wrote; rather an elderly country gentleman with a bird-like alertness and a rare and charming youthfulness—interested in everything he saw, and cultured, but surely not much occupied with books: indeed almost all of us, his new colleagues, would have struck an impartial observer as far more *bookish* than the author of the Wessex novels....

"At the Masefields' Hardy was asked a question or two about Jude's village, which it was thought he might have passed on the road from Dorchester, and he spoke briefly and depreciatingly of 'that fictitious person. If there ever was such a person. . . .' When we left, Hardy holding a rose which Mr. Masefield had cut from his garden, there was still time to see more. I had expected that he would wish to rest, but no; he wanted to see the Martyrs' Memorial and New College Cloisters. Obviously there were certain of the Oxford sights which he had resolved to see again. I am ashamed to remember that, by some

error which I cannot now explain, I conducted our guests to the Chapel, instead of the Cloisters, at New College. But perhaps it was a fortunate error, for the choir were about to sing the evening service, and at Hardy's wish we sat for about twenty minutes in the ante-chapel listening in silence to the soaring of boys' voices. . . .

"Next morning Mr. and Mrs. Hardy left. He spoke often afterwards of his pleasure at having seen his College, and he contemplated another visit. This too brief membership and his one visit remain a very happy memory to his colleagues."

The Hardys motored back to Max Gate by way of Newbury, Winchester, and Ringwood, having lunch in a grassy glade in the New Forest in the simple way that Hardy so much preferred.

This occasion was an outstanding one during the last years of his life.

On July 20 the Prince of Wales paid a visit to Dorchester, to open the new Drill Hall for the Dorset Territorials, and Hardy was invited to meet him there, and to drive back to Max Gate where the Prince and the party accompanying him were to lunch. It was a hot day, and the whole episode might well have proved fatiguing and irksome to a man of Hardy's years and retiring nature, but owing to the thoughtfulness of the Prince and his simple and friendly manner, all passed off pleasantly.

At lunch, beside the Prince and the Hardys, there were present Lord Shaftesbury, Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey, Sir Godfrey Thomas, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Walter Peacock, and Messrs. Proudfoot and Wilson, the Duchy Stewards.

The Prince had a friendly talk with Hardy in the garden, before leaving to visit certain Duchy farms in Dorchester: the main characteristic of the visit was its easy informality.

The next few months saw a certain activity on Hardy's part. He visited several friends either for lunch or tea, as he did not go out in the evening except for a short walk, nor did he again sleep away from Max Gate. Many from a distance also called upon him, including his ever faithful friend Lady St. Helier, who travelled from Newbury to Max Gate on October 3rd, this being their last meeting.

On November 15th the poetic drama *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* was published. Hardy's plan in writing this is clearly given in a letter to Mr. Harold Child:

"The unities are strictly preserved, whatever virtue there may be in that. (I, myself, am old-fashioned enough to think there *is* a virtue in it, if it can be done without artificiality. The only other case I remember attempting it in was *The Return of the Native*.) The original events could have been enacted in the time taken up by the performance, and they continue unbroken throughout. The change of persons on the stage is called a change of scene, there being no change of background.

"My temerity in pulling together into the space of an hour events that in the traditional stories covered a long time will doubtless be criticized, if it is noticed. But there are so many versions of the famous romance that I felt free to adapt it to my purpose in any way—as, in fact, the Greek dramatists did in their plays—notably Euripides.

"Wishing it to be thoroughly English I have dropped the name of Chorus for the conventional onlookers, and called them Chanters, though they play the part of a Greek Chorus to some extent. I have also called them Ghosts (I don't for the moment recall an instance of this in a Greek play). . . . Whether the lady ghosts in our performance will submit to have their faces whitened I don't know! . . .

"I have tried to avoid turning the rude personages of, say, the fifth century into respectable Victorians, as was done by Tennyson, Swinburne, Arnold, etc. On the other

hand it would have been impossible to present them as they really were, with their barbaric manners and surroundings."

On the 28th of the same month the play was produced by the Hardy Players at the Corn Exchange at Dorchester. The great difficulties which the play presented to amateur actors, unaccustomed to reciting blank verse, who were at their best in rustic comedy, were more or less overcome, but naturally a poetic drama did not make a wide appeal. However the performance, and particularly the rehearsals, gave Hardy considerable pleasure.

On December 10 the death was announced of Sir Frederick Treves, Hardy's fellow-townsman, the eminent surgeon. Frederick Treves as a child had attended the same school as Hardy's elder sister Mary, and it was from the shop of Treves's father that Hardy as a boy purchased his first writing-desk. The care which he took of all his possessions during his whole life is shown by the fact that this desk was in his study without a mark or scratch upon it at the time of his death. Because of the early association and the love which they both bore to the county, there was a strong link between these two Dorset men.

On the last day but one of the year Mr. and Mrs. G. Bernard Shaw and Colonel T. E. Lawrence lunched with the Hardys and spent several hours with them. The following entry in his notebook ends his brief chronicle of the year's doings:

"31. *New Year's Eve.* Did not sit up. Heard the bells in the evening."

1924

"*January* 2. Attended Frederick Treves's funeral at St. Peter's. Very wet day. Sad procession to the cemetery. Casket in a little white grave.

"Lord Dawson of Penn and Mr. Newman Flower came out to tea afterwards."

On January 5 a poem by Hardy, "In Memoriam, F. T.", appeared in *The Times*, a last tribute to an old friend.

During February *The Queen of Cornwall* was performed in London by the Hardy Players of Dorchester, but it was not altogether a success, partly owing to the only building available having no stage suitable for the performance, a rather small concert platform having to be used.

On March 7 Hardy notes:

"To Stinsford with F. (E. first met 54 years ago)."

And later, on April 3:

"Mother died 20 years ago to-day."

Among the many letters which arrived on June 2, the 84th anniversary of his birth, was one from a son of the Baptist minister, Mr. Perkins, whom, in his youth, Hardy had so respected. This correspondent was one of the young men who had met him at the Baptist Chapel at the eastern end of the town for a prayer-meeting which was hindered by the arrival of a circus.

More than sixty years had elapsed since Hardy had had any contact with this friend of his youth, and for a little while he was strongly tempted to get into touch with him again. However, too wide a gulf lay between and, as might have been told in one of his poems, the gesture was never made and the days slipped on into oblivion.

On June 11 Mr. Rutland Boughton arrived at Max Gate for a visit of two days, the purpose of which was to consult Hardy about a plan he had for setting *The Queen of Cornwall* to music. Hardy was greatly interested, though he had heard no modern compositions, not even the immensely popular "Faerie Song" from *The Immortal Hour*. "The Blue Danube", "The Morgenblätter Waltz", and the "Overture to William Tell" interested him more strongly,

and also church music, mainly on account of the association with his early days.

But he found Mr. Boughton a stimulating companion, and was interested in his political views, though he could not share them. After Mr. Boughton's departure he said with conviction, "If I had talked to him for a few hours I would soon have converted him".

One feature of this visit was a drive the Hardys took with their guests across parts of Egdon Heath, which were then one blaze of purple with rhododendrons in full bloom.

On June 16 a poem by Hardy entitled "Compassion" appeared in *The Times*. It was written in answer to a request, and was intended to celebrate the Centenary of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Although not one of his most successful efforts, as he was never happy when writing to order, it served to demonstrate the poet's passionate hatred of injustice and barbarity.

> Much has been won—more, maybe, than we know—
> And on we labour hopeful. "Ailinon!"
> A mighty voice calls: "But may the good prevail!"
> And "Blessed are the Merciful!"
> Calls a yet mightier one.

On July 1 the Balliol Players, a party of undergraduates from Oxford, visited Max Gate, during the course of a tour in the west of England, to perform on the lawn *The Oresteia* as *The Curse of the House of Atreus*. This was a pleasant and informal occasion which gave delight to Hardy. Always sympathetic to youth, and a lifelong admirer of Greek tragedy, he fully appreciated this mark of affection and respect. The performance was not without an amusing side. The day was a windy one, and cold for July, hence the players with their bare arms and legs and scanty costumes must have been none too comfortable. However they ran about the lawn and pranced into the

flower-beds with apparent enjoyment. Finding that the carrying of lighted torches in the sunlight was ineffective, they carried instead tall spikes of a giant flowering spiræa which they plucked from a border. While having tea after the play they gathered round Hardy, who talked to them with a sincerity and simplicity that few but he could have shown. Among the names of the players that he jotted down in his notebook were those of Mr. A. L. Cliffe—Clytemnestra: Mr. Anthony Asquith—Cassandra; Mr. Walter Oakshott—Orestes; Mr. H. T. Wade-Gery—Agamemnon; Mr. A. A. Farrer—Electra; and he also notes, "The Balliol Players had come on bicycles, sending on their theatrical properties in a lorry that sometimes broke down". Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker were present as spectators on this occasion.

A day or two later, with reference to what is not clear, Hardy copies a quotation from Emerson:

"The foolish man wonders at the unusual, but the wise man at the usual."

On August 4, noted by Hardy as being the day on which war was declared ten years before, he and Mrs. Hardy motored to Netherton Hall in Devon to lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker. Two days later he received a visit from Siegfried Sassoon and Colonel T. E. Lawrence.

About this time Rutland Boughton's music version of *The Queen of Cornwall* was produced at Glastonbury, and on August 28 Hardy with his wife went to see and hear it, making the journey to Glastonbury by car.

From the 25th to the 30th Hardy was sitting to the Russian sculptor Serge Youriévitch for his bust. This was made in Hardy's study at Max Gate, and though he enjoyed conversation with the sculptor he was tired by the sittings, probably on account of his age, and definitely announced that he would not sit again for anything of the kind.

For several years some of the members of the Dorchester Debating and Dramatic Society had wished to perform a dramatization of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. After much hesitation Hardy handed over his own dramatization, although, as he notes in his diary, he had come to the conclusion that to dramatize a novel was a mistake in art; moreover, that the play ruined the novel and the novel the play. However, the result was that the company, self-styled "The Hardy Players", produced *Tess* with such unexpected success at Dorchester and Weymouth that it was asked for in London, and the following year produced there by professional actors for over a hundred nights, Miss Gwen Ffrangçon-Davies taking the part of "Tess".

On the 22nd of October Hardy with his wife visited for the first time since his childhood the old barn at the back of Kingston Maurward. Here, as a small boy, he had listened to village girls singing old ballads. He pointed out to his wife the corner where they had sat. He looked around at the dusty rafters and the débris, considering possibly the difference that seventy years had made, and his manner as he left the barn was that of one who wished he had not endeavoured to revive a scene from a distant past. Almost certainly he was the only human being left of that once gay party.

A characteristic note ends Hardy's diary for 1924:

"*December* 31. *New Year's Eve.* Sat up and heard Big Ben and the London church bells by wireless ring in the New Year."

On this day also he copied a quotation from an essay by L. Pearsall Smith:

"In every representation of Nature which is a work of art there is to be found, as Professor Courthope said, something which is not to be found in the aspect of Nature which it represents; and what that something is has been a matter of dispute from the earliest days of criticism."

"The same writer adds", notes Hardy, " 'Better use the

word "inspiration" than "genius" for inborn daemonic genius as distinct from conscious artistry'.

"(It seems to me it might be called 'temperamental impulse', which, of course, must be inborn.)"

Early in January 1925 Hardy sent to the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* a poem entitled "The Absolute Explains".

In the spring of this year, in connection with Hardy's dog "Wessex", an incident occurred which was impossible to explain. This dog, a wire-haired terrier, was of great intelligence and very friendly to many who visited Max Gate, though he had defects of temper, due perhaps to a want of thorough training. Among those to whom he showed a partiality was Mr. William Watkins, the honorary secretary to the Society of Dorset Men in London.

About nine o'clock on the evening of April 18, Mr. Watkins called at Max Gate to discuss with Hardy certain matters connected with his society. The dog, as was his wont, rushed into the hall and greeted his friend with vociferous barks. Suddenly these gave way to a piteous whine, and the change was so startling that Wessex's mistress went to see what had happened.

Nothing, however, seemed amiss, and the dog returned into the room where Hardy was sitting and where he was joined by Mr. Watkins. But even here Wessex seemed ill at ease, and from time to time went to the visitor and touched his coat solicitously with his paw, which he always withdrew giving a sharp cry of distress.

Mr. Watkins left a little after ten o'clock, apparently in very good spirits. Early the next morning there came a telephone message from his son to say that the father, Hardy's guest of the night before, had died quite suddenly about an hour after his return to the hotel from Max Gate. As a rule the dog barked furiously when he heard the telephone ring, but on this occasion he remained silent, his nose between his paws.

On May 26 a letter and a leading article appeared in *The Times* on the subject of a Thomas Hardy Chair of Literature and a Wessex University. The letter was signed by many eminent writers and educationalists. At the date of writing, however, the Chair has not been endowed.

Later in the summer, on July 15, a deputation from Bristol University arrived at Max Gate to confer on Hardy the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature. This was the fifth degree he had received from English and Scottish Universities, the others being, in the order in which the degrees were bestowed—Aberdeen, Cambridge, Oxford, and St. Andrews.

At the end of July Hardy sent off the manuscript of his volume of poems, *Human Shows*, to the publishers, and a month later he made arrangements for the performance of his dramatization of *Tess* at the Barnes Theatre. About this time he enters in his notebook:

" 'Truth is what will work', said William James (Harpers). A worse corruption of language was never perpetrated."

Few other events were of interest to him during the year. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was produced in London, but he felt he had not sufficient strength to go up to see it. After nearly two months at Barnes Theatre the play was removed on November 2 to the Garrick Theatre, where the hundredth performance took place.

The many pilgrimages Hardy made with his wife to Stinsford Church took place usually in the evening during the summer, and in the afternoon during the winter. On October 9, however, contrary to his usual custom, he walked to Stinsford in the morning. The bright sunlight shone across the face of a worn tomb whose lettering Hardy had often endeavoured to decipher, so that he might recarve the letters with his penknife. This day, owing to the sunlight, they were able to read:

SACRED
to the memory of
ROBERT REASON
who departed this life
December 26th 1819
Aged 56 years.

Dear friend should you mourn for me
I am where you soon must be.

Although Robert Reason had died twenty-one years before the birth of the author of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, he was faithfully described in that novel as Mr. Penny, the shoemaker, Hardy having heard so much of him from old inhabitants of Bockhampton. He used to regret that he had not used the real name, that being much better for his purpose than the one he had invented.

On December 6 the company of players from the Garrick Theatre arrived at Max Gate in the evening for the purpose of giving a performance of *Tess* in the drawing-room. The following description of this incident is taken from a letter written by one of the company to a correspondent in America who had particularly desired her impression of the visit:

"Mr. and Mrs. Hardy behaved as if it were a most usual occurrence for a party of West-End actors to arrive laden with huge theatrical baskets of clothes and props.

"They met us in the hall and entertained us with tea, cakes and sandwiches, and Mr. Hardy made a point of chatting with everyone.

"The drawing-room was rather a fortunate shape—the door facing an alcove at one end of the room, and we used these to make our exits and entrances, either exiting into the hall or sitting quietly in the alcove.

"Mr. and Mrs. Hardy, a friend of the Hardys, and two maids who, in cap and apron, sat on the floor—made up our audience. I think I am correct in saying there was no

one else. The room was shaded—lamps and firelight throwing the necessary light on our faces.

"We played the scenes of Tess's home with chairs and a tiny drawing-room table to represent farm furniture—tea-cups for drinking mugs—when the chairs and tables were removed the corner of the drawing-room became Stonehenge, and yet in some strange way those present said the play gained from the simplicity.

"It had seemed as if it would be a paralysingly difficult thing to do, to get the atmosphere at all within a few feet of the author himself and without any of the usual theatrical illusion, but speaking for myself, after the first few seconds it was perfectly easy, and Miss Ffrangçon-Davies's beautiful voice and exquisite playing of the Stonehenge scene in the shadows thrown by the firelight was a thing that I shall never forget. It was beautiful.

"Mr. Hardy insisted on talking to us until the last minute. He talked of Tess as if she was someone real whom he had known and liked tremendously. I think he enjoyed the evening. I may be quite wrong, but I got the impression that to him it seemed quite a proper and usual way to give a play—probably as good if not better than any other—and he seemed to have very little conception of the unusualness and difficulties it might present to us.

"The gossip of the country has it that his house was designed and the garden laid out with the idea of being entirely excluded from the gaze of the curious. Of course it was dark when we arrived, but personally I should say he had succeeded."

On December 20 he heard with regret of the death of his friend Sir Hamo Thornycroft, the sculptor, whose bronze head of Hardy was presented later to the National Portrait Gallery by Lady Thornycroft.

Siegfried Sassoon, a nephew of Sir Hamo's, happened to be paying Hardy a visit at the time. He left to go to the funeral of his uncle at Oxford, carrying with him a laurel

wreath which Hardy had sent to be placed on the grave. Hardy had a warm regard for the sculptor, whose fine upstanding mien spoke truly of his nobility of character. The hours Hardy had spent in Sir Hamo's London studio and at his home were pleasant ones, and they had cycled together in Dorset while Sir Hamo was staying at Max Gate.

"*December* 23. Mary's birthday. She came into the world . . . and went out . . . and the world is just the same . . . not a ripple on the surface left."

"*December* 31. *New Year's Eve*. F. and I sat up. Heard on the wireless various features of New Year's Eve in London: dancing at the Albert Hall, Big Ben striking twelve, singing Auld Lang Syne, God Save the King, Marseillaise, hurrahing."

CHAPTER XIX

THE LAST SCENE

1926–*January* 1928: *Aet.* 86–87

EARLY in January 1926, feeling that his age compelled him to such a step, Hardy resigned the Governorship of the Dorchester Grammar School. He had always been reluctant to hold any public offices, knowing that he was by temperament unfitted to sit on committees that controlled or ordained the activities of others. He preferred to be "the man with the watching eye".

On April 27, replying to a letter from an Oxford correspondent, who was one of four who had signed a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* upon the necessity of the reformation of the Prayer Book Services, Hardy writes from Max Gate:

"I have read your letter with interest: also the enclosure that you and your friends sent to the *Manchester Guardian*, particularly because, when I was young, I had a wish to enter the Church.

"I am now too old to take up the questions you lay open, but I may say that it has seemed to me that a simpler plan than that of mental reservation in passages no longer literally accepted (which is puzzling to ordinary congregations) would be just to abridge the creeds and other primitive parts of the Liturgy, leaving only the essentials. Unfortunately there appears to be a narrowing instead of a broadening tendency among the clergy of late, which if persisted in will exclude still more people from Church.

But if a strong body of young reformers were to make a bold stand, in a sort of New Oxford Movement, they would have a tremendous backing from the thoughtful laity, and might overcome the retrogressive section of the clergy.

"Please don't attach much importance to these casual thoughts, and believe me,

"Very truly yours,
"T. H."

In May he received from Mr. Arthur M. Hind a water-colour sketch of an attractive corner in the village of Minterne, which the artist thought might be the original of "Little Hintock" in the *Woodlanders*. In thanking Mr. Hind, Hardy writes:

"The drawing of the barn that you have been so kind as to send me has arrived uninjured, and I thank you much for the gift. I think it a charming picture, and a characteristic reproduction of that part of Dorset.

"As to the spot being the 'Little Hintock' of *The Woodlanders*—that is another question. You will be surprised and shocked at my saying that I myself do not know where 'Little Hintock' is! Several tourists have told me that they have found it, in every detail, and have offered to take me to it, but I have never gone.

"However, to be more definite, it has features which were to be found fifty years ago in the hamlets of Hermitage, Middlemarsh, Lyons-Gate, Revels Inn, Holnest, Melbury Bubb, etc.—all lying more or less under the eminence called High Stoy, just beyond Minterne and Dogbury Gate, where the country descends into the Vale of Blackmore.

"The topographers you mention as identifying the scene are merely guessers and are wrong. . . ."

On June 29 he again welcomed the Balliol Players, whose chosen play this summer, the *Hippolytus* of Eurip-

ides, was performed on the lawn of Max Gate. About the same time he sent by request a message of congratulation and friendship to Weymouth, Massachusetts, by a deputation which was then leaving England to visit that town.

"*July* 1926. Note.—It appears that the theory exhibited in *The Well-Beloved* in 1892 has been since developed by Proust still further:

"Peu de personnes comprennent le caractère purement subjectif du phénomène qu'est l'amour, et la sorte de création que c'est d'une personne supplémentaire, distincte de celle qui porte le même nom dans le monde, et dont la plupart des éléments sont tirés de nous-mêmes." (*Ombre*, i. 40.)

"Le désir s'élève, se satisfait, disparaît—et c'est tout. Ainsi, la jeune fille qu'on épouse n'est pas celle dont on est tombé amoureux." (*Ombre*, ii. 158, 159.)

On September 8 a dramatization of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Mr. John Drinkwater was produced at the Barnes Theatre, and on the 20th the play was brought to Weymouth, where Hardy went to see it. He received a great ovation in the theatre, and also, on his return to Max Gate, from an enthusiastic crowd that collected round the Pavilion Theatre on the pier. From balconies and windows people were seen waving handkerchiefs as he drove past. In his diary he notes:

"20 *September*. Performance of *Mayor of Casterbridge* at Weymouth by London Company, a 'flying matinée'. Beautiful afternoon, scene outside the theatre finer than within."

Writing to a friend about a proposed dramatization of *Jude the Obscure*, he observes:

"I may say that I am not keen on the new mode (as I suppose it is regarded, though really Elizabethan) of giving a series of episodes in the film manner instead of set scenes.

"Of the outlines I sent you which suggested themselves to me many years ago, I thought the one I called (I think) '4th Scheme' most feasible.

"Would not Arabella be the villain of the piece?—or Jude's personal constitution?—so far as there is any villain more than blind Chance. Christminster is of course the tragic influence of Jude's drama in one sense, but innocently so, and merely as crass obstruction. By the way it is not meant to be exclusively Oxford, but any old-fashioned University about the date of the story, 1860–70, before there were such chances for poor men as there are now. I have somewhere printed that I had no feeling against Oxford in particular."

A few days later he visited Mrs. Bankes at Kingston Lacy in Dorset, and was greatly interested in the priceless collection of pictures shown him. Of this occasion he writes:

"*End of September.* With F. on a visit to Mrs. Bankes at Kingston Lacy. She told me an amusing story when showing me a letter to Sir John Bankes from Charles the First, acknowledging that he had borrowed £500 from Sir John. Many years ago when she was showing the same letter to King Edward, who was much interested in it, she said, 'Perhaps, Sir, that's a little matter which could now be set right'. He replied quickly, 'Statute of Limitations, Statute of Limitations'."

Another note:

"1 *November.* Went with Mr. Hanbury to Bockhampton and looked at fencing, trees, etc., with a view to tidying and secluding the Hardy house."

That was his last visit to the place of his birth. It was always a matter of regret to him if he saw this abode in a state of neglect, or the garden uncherished.

During this month, November, his friend Colonel T. E. Lawrence called to say good-bye, before starting for India. Hardy was much affected by this parting, as T. E.

Lawrence was one of his most valued friends. He went into the little porch and stood at the front door to see the departure of Lawrence on his motor-bicycle. This machine was difficult to start, and, thinking he might have to wait some time Hardy turned into the house to fetch a shawl to wrap round him. In the meantime, fearing that Hardy might take a chill, Lawrence started the motor-bicycle and hurried away. Returning a few moments after, Hardy was grieved that he had not seen the actual departure, and said that he had particularly wished to see Lawrence go.

The sight of animals being taken to market or driven to slaughter always aroused in Hardy feelings of intense pity, as he well knew, as must anyone living in or near a market-town, how much needless suffering is inflicted. In his notebook at this time he writes:

"*December* (1st Week). Walking with F. by railway, saw bullocks and cows going to Islington (?) for slaughter." Under this he drew a little pencil sketch of the rows of trucks as they were seen by him, with animals' heads at every opening, looking out at the green countryside they were leaving for scenes of horror in a far-off city. Hardy thought of this sight for long after. It was found in his will that he had left a sum of money to each of two societies "to be applied so far as practicable to the investigation of the means by which animals are conveyed from their houses to the slaughter-houses with a view to the lessening of their sufferings in such transit".

The year drew quietly to an end. On the 23rd of December a band of carol-singers from St. Peter's, Dorchester, came to Max Gate and sang to Hardy "While Shepherds Watched" to the tune which used to be played by his father and grandfather, a copy of which he had given to the Rector.

A sadness fell upon the household, for Hardy's dog, Wessex, now thirteen years old, was ill and obviously near his end.

Two days after Christmas day Hardy makes this entry:

"27 *December*. Our famous dog 'Wessex' died at ½ past 6 in the evening, thirteen years of age."

"28. Wessex buried."

"28. *Night*. Wessex sleeps outside the house the first time for thirteen years."

The dog lies in a small turfed grave in the shrubbery on the west side of Max Gate, where also were buried several pet cats and one other dog, Moss. On the headstone is this inscription drawn up by Hardy, and carved from his design:

THE
FAMOUS DOG
WESSEX

August 1913–27 Dec. 1926
Faithful. Unflinching.

There were those among Hardy's friends who thought that his life was definitely saddened by the loss of Wessex, the dog having been the companion of himself and his wife during twelve years of married life. Upon summer evenings or winter afternoons Wessex would walk with them up the grassy slope in the field in front of their house, to the stile that led into Came Plantation, and while Hardy rested on the stile the dog would sit on the ground and survey the view as his master was doing. On Frome Hill when his companions sat on the green bank by the roadside, or on the barrow that crowns the hill, he would lie in the grass at their feet and gaze at the landscape, "as if", to quote Hardy's oft-repeated comment on this, "it were the right thing to do".

Those were happy innocent hours. A poem written after the dog's death, "Dead Wessex, the dog to the household", well illustrates Hardy's sense of loss. Two of its verses are:

Do you look for me at times,
Wistful ones?
Do you look for me at times
Strained and still?
Do you look for me at times,
When the hour for walking chimes,
On that grassy path that climbs
Up the hill?

You may hear a jump or trot,
Wistful ones,
You may hear a jump or trot—
Mine, as 'twere—
You may hear a jump or trot
On the stair or path or plot;
But I shall cause it not,
Be not there.

On December 29 Hardy wrote to his friends Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker from Max Gate:

". . . This is intended to be a New Year's letter, but I don't know if I have made a good shot at it. How kind of you to think of sending me Raymond Guyot's *Napoleon*. I have only glanced at it, at the text that is, as yet, but what an interesting collection of records bearing on the life of the man who finished the Revolution with 'a whiff of grapeshot', and so crushed not only its final horrors but all the worthy aspirations of its earlier time, made them as if they had never been, and threw back human altruism scores, perhaps hundreds of years."

"31 *December. New Year's Eve.* Did not sit up."

In January 1927 "A Philosophical Fantasy" appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*. Hardy liked the year to open with a poem of this type from him in some leading review or newspaper. The quotation at the heading, "Milton . . . made God argue", gives the keynote, and the philosophy is much as he had set forth before, but still a ray of hope is shown for the future of mankind.

Aye, to human tribes nor kindlessness
Nor love I've given, but mindlessness,
Which state, though far from ending,
May nevertheless be mending.

Weeks passed through a cold spring and Hardy's eighty-seventh birthday was reached. This year, instead of remaining at Max Gate, he motored with his wife to Netherton Hall in Devonshire, to spend a part of the day with friends, Helen and Harley Granville-Barker. In a letter written some months later, Mrs. Granville-Barker describes this visit.

". . . There were no guests, just the peaceful routine of everyday life, for that last birthday here. Mr. Hardy said to you afterwards, you told me, that he thought it might be the last, but at the time he was not in any way sad or unlike himself. He noticed, as always, and unlike most old people, the smallest things. At luncheon, I remember, one of the lace doilies at his place got awry in an ugly way, showing the mat underneath, and I saw him, quietly and with the most delicate accuracy, setting it straight again—all the time taking his part in the talk.

"Wasn't it that day he said, speaking of Augustus John's portrait of him:

" 'I don't know whether that is how I look or not—but that is how I *feel*'?

"In the afternoon we left him alone in the library because we thought he wanted to rest a little. It was cold, for June, and a wood fire was lighted.

"Once we peeped in at him through the garden window. He was not asleep but sitting, walled in with books, staring into the fire with that deep look of his. The cat had established itself on his knees and he was stroking it gently, but half-unconsciously.

"It was a wonderful picture of him. I shall not forget it. Nor shall I forget the gay and startlingly youthful

gesture with which he flourished his hat towards us as, once in the motor-car, later that afternoon, he drove away from us."

At the end of the day he seemed in a sad mood, and his wife sought to amuse him by a forecast of small festivities she had planned for his ninetieth birthday, which she assured him would be a great occasion. With a flash of gaiety he replied that he intended to spend that day in bed.

Once again the Balliol Players appeared at Max Gate, this year on July 6. As before, their visit gave Hardy considerable pleasure, and after their performance on the lawn of *Iphigenia in Aulis* he talked with them fr appreciating their boyish ardour and their modesty.

A few days later he received visits from his friends Siegfried Sassoon and Mr. and Mrs. John Masefield, and on July 21 he laid the foundation-stone of the new building of the Dorchester Grammar School, which was to be seen clearly from the front gate of his house, looking towards the Hardy Monument, a noticeable object on the sky-line, to the south-west. It was Hardy's custom nearly every fine morning after breakfast in the summer to walk down to the gate to see what the weather was likely to be by observing this tower in the distance.

The day chosen for the stone-laying was cold and windy, by no means a suitable day for a man of Hardy's advanced years to stand in the open air bareheaded. Nevertheless he performed his task with great vigour, and gave the following address in a clear resonant voice that could be heard on the outskirts of the crowd that collected to hear him:

"I have been asked to execute the formal part of to-day's function, which has now been done, and it is not really necessary that I should add anything to the few words that are accustomed to be used at the laying of foundation or dedication stones. But as the circumstances

of the present case are somewhat peculiar, I will just enlarge upon them for a minute or two. What I have to say is mainly concerning the Elizabethan philanthropist, Thomas Hardy, who, with some encouragement from the burgesses, endowed and rebuilt this ancient school after its first humble shape—him whose namesake I have the honour to be, and whose monument stands in the church of St. Peter, visible from this spot. The well-known epitaph inscribed upon his tablet, unlike many epitaphs, does not, I am inclined to think, exaggerate his virtues, since it was written, not by his relatives or dependents, but by the free burgesses of Dorchester in gratitude for his good action rds the town. This good deed was accomplished in tter part of the sixteenth century, and the substantial stone building in which it merged eventually still stands to dignify South Street, as we all know, and hope it may remain there.

"But what we know very little about is the personality of this first recorded Thomas Hardy of the Froome Valley here at our back, though his work abides. He was without doubt of the family of the Hardys who landed in this county from Jersey in the fifteenth century, acquired small estates along the river upwards towards its source, and whose descendants have mostly remained hereabouts ever since, the Christian name of Thomas having been especially affected by them. He died in 1599, and it is curious to think that though he must have had a modern love of learning not common in a remote county in those days, Shakespeare's name could hardly have been known to him, or at the most vaguely as that of a certain ingenious Mr. Shakespeare who amused the London playgoers; and that he died before Milton was born.

"In Carlylean phraseology, what manner of man he was when he walked this earth, we can but guess, or what he looked like, what he said and did in his lighter moments, and at what age he died. But we may shrewdly conceive

that he was a far-sighted man, and would not be much surprised, if he were to revisit the daylight, to find that his building had been outgrown, and no longer supplied the needs of the present inhabitants for the due education of their sons. His next feeling might be to rejoice in the development of what was possibly an original design of his own, and to wish the reconstruction every success.

"We living ones all do that, and nobody more than I, my retirement from the Governing body having been necessitated by old age only. Certainly everything promises well. The site can hardly be surpassed in England for health, with its open surroundings, elevated and bracing situation, and dry subsoil, while it is near enough to the sea to get very distinct whiffs of marine air. Moreover, it is not so far from the centre of the borough as to be beyond the walking powers of the smallest boy. It has a capable headmaster, holding every modern idea on education within the limits of good judgement, and assistant masters well equipped for their labours, which are not sinecures in these days.

"I will conclude by thanking the Governors and other friends for their kind thought in asking me to undertake this formal initiation of the new building, which marks such an interesting stage in the history of the Dorchester Grammar School."

After the ceremony, having spoken to a few friends, Hardy went away without waiting for the social gathering that followed. He was very tired, and when he reached home he said that he had made his last public appearance.

There seemed no ill after-effects, however, and on August 9 Hardy drove with Gustav Holst to "Egdon Heath", just then purple with heather. They then went on to Puddletown and entered the fine old church, and both climbed up into the gallery, where probably some of Hardy's ancestors had sat in the choir, more than a century earlier.

On August 8 he wrote to Mr. J. B. Priestley:

". . . I send my sincere thanks for your kind gift of the 'George Meredith' book, and should have done so before if I had not fallen into the sere, and weak eyesight did not trouble me. I have read your essay, or rather have had it read to me, and have been much interested in the bright writing of one in whom I had already fancied I discerned a coming force in letters.

"I am not at all a critic, especially *of* a critic, and when the author he reviews is a man who was, off and on, a friend of mine for forty years; but it seems to me that you hold the scales very fairly. Meredith was, as you recognize, and might have insisted on even more strongly, and I always felt, in the direct succession of Congreve and the artificial comedians of the Restoration, and in getting his brilliancy we must put up with the fact that he would not, or could not—at any rate did not—when aiming to represent the 'Comic Spirit', let himself discover the tragedy that always underlies Comedy if you only scratch it deeply enough."

During the same month Hardy and his wife motored to Bath and back. On the way they had lunch sitting on a grassy bank, as they had done in former years, to Hardy's pleasure. But now a curious sadness brooded over them; lunching in the open air had lost its charm, and they did not attempt another picnic of this kind.

In Bath Hardy walked about and looked long and silently at various places that seemed to have an interest for him. He seemed like a ghost revisiting scenes of a long-dead past. After a considerable rest in the Pump Room they returned home. Hardy did not seem tired by this drive.

Some weeks later they motored to Ilminster, a little country town that Hardy had long desired to visit. He was interested in the church, and also in the tomb of the

founder of Wadham College therein. By his wish, on their return, they drove past the quarries where Ham Hill stone was cut.

Stopping at Yeovil they had tea in a restaurant, where a band of some three musicians were playing. One of Hardy's most attractive characteristics was his ability to be interested in simple things, and before leaving he stood and listened appreciatively to the music, saying afterwards what a delightful episode that had been.

On September 6, an exceedingly wet day, Mr. and Mrs. John Galsworthy called on their way to London. During the visit Hardy told them the story of a murder that had happened eighty years before. Mr. Galsworthy seemed struck by these memories of Hardy's early childhood, and asked whether he had always remembered those days so vividly, or only lately. Hardy replied that he had always remembered clearly. He could recall what his mother had said about the Rush murder when he was about the age of six: "The governess hanged him". He was puzzled, and wondered how a governess could hang a man. Mr. and Mrs. Galsworthy thought that Hardy seemed better than when they saw him last, better, in fact, than they had ever seen him.

September 7 being a gloriously fine day, Hardy with his wife walked across the fields opposite Max Gate to see the building of the new Grammar School, then in progress.

During September Hardy was revising and rearranging the *Selected Poems* in the Golden Treasury Series in readiness for a new edition. The last entry but one in his notebook refers to the sending of the copy to the publishers, and finally, on the 19th of September, he notes that Mr. Weld of Lulworth Castle called with some friends. After this no more is written, but a few notes were made by his wife for the remaining weeks of 1927.

About the 21st of September they drove to Lulworth Castle to lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Weld and a

house-party, and Hardy was much interested in all that he was shown in the Castle and in the adjoining church. A few weeks later he and his wife lunched at Charborough Park, the scene of *Two on a Tower*, the first time he had entered this house.

NOTES BY F. E. H.

"*October* 24. A glorious day. T. and I walked across the field in front of Max Gate towards Came. We both stood on a little flat stone sunk in the path that we call our wishing stone, and I wished. T. may have done so, but he did not say.

"On the way he gathered up some waste paper that was blowing about the lane at the side of our house and buried it in the hedge with his stick, and going up the path to Came he stopped for quite a long time to pull off the branches of a tree a heap of dead weeds that had been thrown there by some untidy labourer who had been cleaning the field. He says that a man has no public spirit who passes by any untidiness out of doors, litter of paper or similar rubbish."

"*October* 27. During the evening he spoke of an experience he had a few years ago. There were four or five people to tea at Max Gate, and he noticed a stranger standing by me most of the time. Afterwards he asked who that dark man was who stood by me. I told him that there was no stranger present, and I gave him the names of the three men who were there, all personal friends. He said that it was not one of these, and seemed to think that another person had actually been there. This afternoon he said: 'I can see his face now'.

"Later in the evening, during a terrific gale, I said that I did not wonder that some people disliked going along the dark road outside our house at night.

"T. replied that for twelve years he walked backwards

and forwards from Bockhampton to Dorchester often in the dark, and he was only frightened twice. Once was when he was going up Stinsford Hill, no habitation of any sort being in sight, and he came upon two men sitting on chairs, one on either side of the road. By the moonlight he saw that they were strangers to him; terrified, he took to his heels; he never heard who they were or anything to explain the incident.

"The other time was when, as a small boy walking home from school, reading *Pilgrim's Progress*, he was so alarmed by the description of Apollyon that he hastily closed his book and went on his way trembling, thinking that Apollyon was going to spring out of a tree whose dark branches overhung the road. He remembered his terror, he said, that evening, seventy-five years afterwards."

"*October* 30. At lunch T. H. talked about Severn, speaking with admiration of his friendship towards Keats. He said that it must have been quite disinterested, as Keats was then comparatively obscure."

"*October* 31. Henry Williamson, the author of *Tarka the Otter*, called."

"*November* 3. While he was having tea to-day, T. H. said that whenever he heard any music from *Il Trovatore*, it carried him back to the first year when he was in London and when he was strong and vigorous and enjoyed his life immensely. He thought that *Il Trovatore* was good music."

"*November* 4. We drove in the afternoon to Stinsford, to put flowers on the family graves. The tombs are very green, being covered with moss because they are under a yew-tree. T. H. scraped off most of the moss with a little wooden implement like a toy spade, six inches in length, which he made with his own hands and which he carries in his pocket when he goes to Stinsford. He remarked that Walter de la Mare had told him that he preferred to see the gravestones green.

"Then we drove to Talbothays (his brother's house).

As we turned up Dark Hill, T. H. pointed out the place where, as a small boy, he had left an umbrella in the hedge, having put it down while he cut a stick. He did not remember it until he reached home and his mother asked him where was his umbrella. As he went to school next morning he looked in the hedge and found it where he had left it.

"After having been with H. H. and K. H. (the brother and sister) for half an hour we returned home."

Thus ended a series of visits paid regularly to his family extending over forty years. While his parents were alive, Hardy went to see them at Bockhampton nearly every Sunday afternoon when he was in Dorchester, walking at first, then cycling. After his mother's death he visited his two sisters and his brother at Bockhampton, and later at Talbothays, to which house they moved in 1912. These visits continued until the last year or two of his life, when he was unable to go very often. He cycled there in fine weather until he was over eighty, and then he walked, until the distance seemed beyond his powers. Stinsford was a favourite haunt until the last few months of his life, the walk there from Max Gate, across the water-meadows, being a particularly beautiful one; and the churchyard, to him, the most hallowed spot on earth.

"*November* 4, *continued*. At tea T. H. said that he had been pleased to read that day an article by the composer Miss Ethel Smyth, saying that *Il Trovatore* was good music. He reminded me of what he said yesterday."

"*November* 11. *Armistice Day*. T. came downstairs from his study and listened to the broadcasting of a service at Canterbury Cathedral. We stood there for the two minutes' silence. He said afterwards that he had been thinking of Frank George, his cousin, who was killed at Gallipoli.

"In the afternoon we took one of our usual little walks, around 'the triangle' as we call it, that is down the lane by the side of our house, and along the cinder-path beside

the railway line. We stood and watched a goods train carrying away huge blocks of Portland stone as we have done so many times. He seems never tired of watching these stone-laden trucks. He said he thought that the shape of Portland would be changed in the course of years by the continual cutting away of its surface.

"Sitting by the fire after tea he told me about various families of poachers he had known as a boy, and how, when a thatched house at Bockhampton was pulled down, a pair of swingels was found under the thatch. This was an instrument of defence used by poachers, and capable of killing a man.[1]

"He said that if he had his life over again he would prefer to be a small architect in a country town, like Mr. Hicks at Dorchester, to whom he was articled."

"*November* 17. To-day T. H. was speaking, and evidently thinking a great deal, about a friend, a year or two older than himself, who was a fellow-pupil at Mr. Hicks's office. I felt, as he talked, that he would like to meet this man again more than anyone in the world. He is in Australia now, if alive, and must be nearly ninety. His name is Henry Robert Bastow; he was a Baptist and evidently a very religious youth, and T. H. was devoted to him. I suggested that we might find out something about him by sending an advertisement to Australian newspapers, but T. H. thought that would not be wise."

"*Sunday, November* 27. The fifteenth anniversary of the death of Emma Lavinia Hardy; Thursday was the anniversary of the death of Mary, his elder sister. For two or three days he has been wearing a black hat as a token of mourning, and carries a black walking-stick that belonged to his first wife, all strangely moving.

[1] Poachers' iron swingels. A strip of iron ran down three or four sides of the flail part, and the two flails were united by three or four links of chain, the keepers carrying cutlasses which would cut off the ordinary eel-skin hinge of a flail.—*From T. H.'s notebook, Dec. 1884.*

He resolves to say no more.

O my ~~heart~~ soul, keep the rest unknown!
It is too like a sound of moan
When the charnel-eyed
Pale Horse has neighed:
Yea, none shall gather what I hide!

Why load men's minds with more to bear
That bear already ails to spare?
From now away
Till my last day
What I discern I will not say.

Let Time roll backward if it will;
(Magians who drive the midnight quill
With brain aglow
Can see it so,)
What I have learnt no man shall know.

And if my vision range beyond
The blinkered sight of souls in bond,
—By truth made free—
I'll let all be,
And show to no man what I see.

Facsimile reproduction from page of original MS. of *Winter Words*. Written 1927.

"T. H. has been writing almost all the day, revising poems. When he came down to tea he brought one to show me, about a desolate spring morning, and a shepherd counting his sheep and not noticing the weather." This is the poem in *Winter Words* called "An Unkindly May".

"*November* 28. Speaking about ambition T. said today that he had done all that he meant to do, but he did not know whether it had been worth doing.

"His only ambition, so far as he could remember, was to have some poem or poems in a good anthology like the Golden Treasury.

"The model he had set before him was 'Drink to me only', by Ben Jonson."

The earliest recollection of his childhood (as he had told me before) was that when he was four years old his father gave him a small toy concertina and wrote on it, "Thomas Hardy, 1844". By this inscription he knew, in after years, his age when that happened.

Also he remembered, perhaps a little later than this, being in the garden at Bockhampton with his father on a bitterly cold winter day. They noticed a fieldfare, half-frozen, and the father took up a stone idly and threw it at the bird, possibly not meaning to hit it. The fieldfare fell dead, and the child Thomas picked it up and it was as light as a feather, all skin and bone, practically starved. He said he had never forgotten how the body of the fieldfare felt in his hand: the memory had always haunted him.

He recalled how, crossing the ewe-leaze when a child, he went on hands and knees and pretended to eat grass in order to see what the sheep would do. Presently he looked up and found them gathered around in a close ring, gazing at him with astonished faces.

An illness, which at the commencement did not seem to be serious, began on December 11. On the morning

of that day he sat at the writing-table in his study, and felt totally unable to work. This, he said, was the first time that such a thing had happened to him.

From then his strength waned daily. He was anxious that a poem he had written, "Christmas in the Elgin Room", should be copied and sent to *The Times*. This was done, and he asked his wife anxiously whether she had posted it with her own hands. When she assured him that she had done so he seemed content, and said he was glad that he had cleared everything up. Two days later he received a personal letter of thanks, with a warm appreciation of his work, from the editor of *The Times*. This gave him pleasure, and he asked that a reply should be sent.

He continued to come downstairs to sit for a few hours daily, until Christmas day. After that he came downstairs no more.

On December 26 he said that he had been thinking of the Nativity and of the Massacre of the Innocents, and his wife read to him the gospel accounts, and also articles in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. He remarked that there was not a grain of evidence that the gospel story was true in any detail.

As the year ended a window in the dressing-room adjoining his bedroom was opened that he might hear the bells, as that had always pleased him. But now he said that he could not hear them, and did not seem interested.

His strength still failed. The weather was bitterly cold, and snow had fallen heavily, being twelve inches deep in parts of the garden. In the road outside there were snowdrifts that in places would reach a man's waist.

By desire of the local practitioner additional advice was called in, and Hardy's friend Sir Henry Head, who was living in the neighbourhood, made invaluable suggestions and kept a watchful eye upon the case. But the weakness increased daily.

He could no longer listen to the reading of prose, though a short poem now and again interested him. In the middle of one night he asked his wife to read aloud to him "The Listeners", by Walter de la Mare.

On January 10 he made a strong rally, and although he was implored not to do so he insisted upon writing a cheque for his subscription to the Pension Fund of the Society of Authors. For the first time in his life he made a slightly feeble signature, unlike his usual beautiful firm handwriting, and then he laid down his pen.

Later he was interested to learn that J. M. Barrie, his friend of many years, had arrived from London to assist in any way that might be possible. He was amused when told that this visitor had gone to the kitchen door to avoid any disturbance by ringing the front-door bell.

In the evening he asked that Robert Browning's poem "Rabbi Ben Ezra" should be read aloud to him. While reading it his wife glanced at his face to see whether he were tired, the poem being a long one of thirty-two stanzas, and she was struck by the look of wistful intentness with which Hardy was listening. He indicated that he wished to hear the poem to the end.

He had a better night, and in the morning of January 11 seemed so much stronger that one at least of those who watched beside him had confident hopes of his recovery, and an atmosphere of joy prevailed in the sick-room. An immense bunch of grapes arrived from London, sent by a friend, and this aroused in Hardy great interest. As a rule he disliked receiving gifts, but on this occasion he showed an almost childlike pleasure, and insisted upon the grapes being held up for the inspection of the doctor, and whoever came into the room. He ate some, and said quite gaily, "I'm going on with these". Everything he had that day in the way of food or drink he seemed to appreciate keenly, though naturally he took but little. As it grew dusk, after a long musing silence, he

asked his wife to repeat to him a verse from the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, beginning

Oh, Thou, who man of baser Earth—

She took his copy of this work from his bedside and read to him:

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

He indicated that he wished no more to be read.

In the evening he had a sharp heart attack of a kind he had never had before. The doctor was summoned and came quickly, joining Mrs. Hardy at the bedside. Hardy remained conscious until a few minutes before the end. Shortly after nine he died.

An hour later one, going to his bedside yet again, saw on the death-face an expression such as she had never seen before on any being, or indeed on any presentment of the human countenance. It was a look of radiant triumph such as imagination could never have conceived. Later the first radiance passed away, but dignity and peace remained as long as eyes could see the mortal features of Thomas Hardy.

The dawn of the following day rose in almost unparalleled splendour. Flaming and magnificent the sky stretched its banners over the dark pines that stood sentinel around.

APPENDIX I

On the morning of Thursday, January 12, the Dean of Westminster readily gave his consent to a proposal that Hardy should be buried in Westminster Abbey; and news of this proposal and its acceptance was sent to Max Gate. There it was well known that Hardy's own wish was to be buried at Stinsford, amid the graves of his ancestors and of his first wife. After much consideration a compromise was found between this definite personal wish and the nation's claim to the ashes of the great poet. On Friday, January 13, his heart was taken out of his body and placed by itself in a casket. On Saturday, January 14, the body was sent to Woking for cremation, and thence the ashes were taken the same day to Westminster Abbey and placed in the Chapel of St. Faith to await interment. On Sunday, January 15, the casket containing the heart was taken to the church at Stinsford, where it was laid on the altar steps.

At two o'clock on Monday, January 16, there were three services in three different churches. In Westminster Abbey the poet's wife and sister were the chief mourners, while in the presence of a great crowd, which included representatives of the King and other members of the Royal Family, and of many learned and other societies, the ashes of Thomas Hardy were buried with stately ceremonial in Poet's Corner. The pall-bearers were the Prime Minister (Mr. Stanley Baldwin) and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, representing the Government and Parliament; Sir James Barrie, Mr. John Galsworthy, Sir Edmund

Gosse, Professor A. E. Housman, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, and Mr. Bernard Shaw, representing literature; and the Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge (Mr. A. S. Ramsey), and the Pro-Provost of Queen's College, Oxford (Dr. E. M. Walker), representing the Colleges of which Hardy was an honorary Fellow. A spadeful of Dorset earth, sent by a Dorset farm labourer, Mr. Christopher Corbin, was sprinkled on the casket. In spite of the cold and wet the streets about the Abbey were full of people who had been unable to obtain admission to the service, but came as near as they might to taking part in it. At the same hour at Stinsford, where Hardy was baptized, and where as boy and man he had often worshipped, his brother, Mr. Henry Hardy, was the chief mourner, while, in the presence of a rural population, the heart of this lover of rural Wessex was buried in the grave of his first wife among the Hardy tombs under the great yew-tree in the corner of the churchyard. And in Dorchester all business was suspended for an hour, while at St. Peter's Church the Mayor and Corporation and many other dignitaries and societies attended a memorial service in which the whole neighbourhood joined. H. C.

ENTRANCE TO STINSFORD CHURCHYARD

APPENDIX II

LETTERS FROM THOMAS HARDY TO DR. CALEB SALEEBY

I

MAX GATE, DORCHESTER,
Dec. 21, 1914.

DEAR SIR,

I have read with much interest the lecture on *The Longest Price of War* that you kindly send: and its perusal does not diminish the gloom with which this ghastly business on the Continent fills me, as it fills so many. The argument would seem to favour Conscription, since the inert, if not the unhealthy, would be taken, I imagine.

Your visits to *The Dynasts* show that, as Granville-Barker foretold, thoughtful people would care about it. My own opinion when I saw it was that it was the only sort of thing likely to take persons of musing turn into a theatre at this time.

I have not read M. Bergson's book, and if you should not find it troublesome to send your copy as you suggest, please do.

The theory of the Prime Force that I used in *The Dynasts* was published in Jan. 1904. The nature of the determination embraced in the theory is that of a collective will; so that there is a proportion of the total will in each part of the whole, and each part has therefore, in strictness, *some* freedom, which would, in fact, be operative as

such whenever the remaining great mass of will in the universe should happen to be in equilibrium.

However, as the work is intended to be a poetic drama and not a philosophic treatise I did not feel bound to develop this.

The assumption of unconsciousness in the driving force is, of course, not new. But I think the view of the unconscious force as gradually *becoming* conscious: *i.e.* that consciousness is creeping further and further back towards the origin of force, had never (so far as I know) been advanced before *The Dynasts* appeared. But being only a mere impressionist I must not pretend to be a philosopher in a letter, and ask you to believe me,

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS HARDY.

Dr. Saleeby.

2

MAX GATE, DORCHESTER,
Feb. 2, 1915.

DEAR DR. SALEEBY,

Your activities are unlimited. I should like to hear your address on "Our War for International Law". Personally I feel rather disheartened when I think it probable that the war will end by sheer exhaustion of the combatants, and that things will be left much as they were before. But I hope not.

I have been now and then dipping into your Bergson, and shall be returning the volume soon. I suppose I may assume that you are more or less disciple, or fellow-philosopher, of his. Therefore you may be rather shocked

by some views I hold about his teachings—if I may say I hold any views about anything whatever, which I hardly do.

His theories are certainly much more delightful than those they contest, and I for one would gladly believe them, but I cannot help feeling all the time that he is rather an imaginative and poetical writer than a reasoner, and that for his attractive assertions he does not adduce any proofs whatever. His use of the word "creation" seems loose to me. Then, as to "conduct". I fail to see how, if it is not mechanism, it can be other than Caprice, though he denies it (p. 50). And he says that Mechanism and Finalism (I agree with him as to Finalism) are only external views of our conduct.

"Our conduct extends between them, and slips much further." Well, I hope it may, but he nowhere shows that it does. And again: "a mechanistic conception . . . treats the living as the inert. . . . Let us on the contrary, trace a line of demarcation between the inert and the living (208)." Well, let us, to our great pleasure, if we can see why we should introduce an inconsistent rupture of order into uniform and consistent laws of the same.

You will see how much I want to be a Bergsonian (indeed I have for many years). But I fear that his philosophy is, in the bulk, only our old friend Dualism in a new suit of clothes—an ingenious fancy without real foundation, and more complicated, and therefore less likely than the determinist fancy and others that he endeavours to overthrow.

You must not think me a hard-hearted rationalist for all this. Half my time (particularly when I write verse) I believe—in the modern use of the word—not only in things that Bergson does, but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places, etc., etc.

But then, I do not believe in these in the old sense of belief any more for that; and in arguing against Bergson-

ism I have, of course, meant belief in its old sense when I aver myself incredulous.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS HARDY.[1]

3

MAX GATE, DORCHESTER,
16.3.1915.

DEAR DR. SALEEBY,

My thanks for the revised form of *The Longest Price of War*, which I am reading.

. . . . . .

I am returning, or shall be in a day or two, your volume of Bergson. It is most interesting reading, and one likes to give way to its views and assurances without criticizing them.

If, however, we ask for reasons and proof (which I don't care to do) I am afraid we do not get them.

An *élan vital*—by which I understand him to mean a sort of additional and spiritual force, beyond the merely unconscious push of life—the "will" of other philosophers that propels growth and development—seems much less probable than single and simple determinism, or what he calls mechanism, because it is more complex: and where proof is impossible probability must be our guide. His partly mechanistic and partly creative theory seems to me clumsy and confused.

He speaks of "the enormous gap that separates even the lowest form of life from the inorganic world". Here again it is more probable that organic and inorganic modu-

[1] A great part of this letter will be found in a slightly different form on pp. 167-168 of this volume. Both versions are printed in order to illustrate Hardy's artistic inability to rest content with anything that he wrote until he had brought the expression as near to his thought as language would allow. He would, for instance, often go on revising his poems for his own satisfaction after their publication in book form.—F. E. H.

late into each other, one nature and law operating throughout. But the most fatal objection to his view of creation *plus* propulsion seems to me to lie in the existence of pain. If nature were creative she would have created painlessness, or be in process of creating it—pain being the first thing we instinctively fly from. If on the other hand we cannot introduce into life what is not already there, and are bound to mere recombination of old materials, the persistence of pain is intelligible.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS HARDY.

APPENDIX III

LETTERS ON "THE DYNASTS"

MAX GATE, DORCHESTER,
New Year's Eve, 1907.

MY DEAR CLODD,

I write a line to thank you for that nice little copy of Munro's Lucretius, and to wish you a happy New Year. I am familiar with two translations of the poet, but not with this one, so the book is not wasted.

I have been thinking what a happy man you must be at this time of the year, in having to write your name 8000 times. Nobody wants me to write mine once!

In two or three days I shall have done with the proofs of *Dynasts* III. It is well that the business should be over, for I have been living in Wellington's campaigns so much lately that, like George IV, I am almost positive that I took part in the battle of Waterloo, and have written of it from memory.

What new side of science are you writing about at present?

Yours sincerely,

THOMAS HARDY.

MAX GATE,
20:2:1908.

MY DEAR CLODD,

I must send a line or two in answer to your letter. What you remind me of—the lyrical account of the fauna of

Waterloo field on the eve of the battle is, curiously enough, the page (p. 282) that struck me, in looking back over the book, as being the most original in it. Though, of course, a thing may be original without being good. However, it does happen that (so far as I know) in the many treatments of Waterloo in literature, those particular personages who were present have never been alluded to before.

Yes: I left off on a note of hope. It was just as well that the Pities should have the last word, since, like *Paradise Lost*, *The Dynasts* proves nothing.

Always yours sincerely,

THOMAS HARDY.

P.S.—The idea of the Unconscious Will becoming conscious with flux of time, is also new, I think, whatever it may be worth. At any rate I have never met with it anywhere.—T. H.

MAX GATE, DORCHESTER,
28:8:1914.

MY DEAR CLODD,

I fear we cannot take advantage of your kind invitation, and pay you a visit just now—much as in some respects we should like to. With the Germans (apparently) only a week from Paris, the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. We shall hope to come when things look brighter.

Trifling incidents here bring home to us the condition of affairs not far off—as I daresay they do to you still more—sentries with gleaming bayonets at unexpected places as we motor along, the steady flow of soldiers through here to Weymouth, and their disappearance across the Channel in the silence of night, and the 1000 prisoners whom we get glimpses of through chinks, mark these fine days. The prisoners, they say, have already mustered

enough broken English to say "Shoot Kaiser!" and oblige us by playing "God Save the King" on their concertinas and fiddles. Whether this is "meant sarcastic", as Artemus Ward used to say, I cannot tell.

I was pleased to know that you were so comfortable, when I was picturing you in your shirt sleeves with a lot of other robust Aldeburghers digging a huge trench from Aldeburgh church to the top of those steps we go down to your house, streaming with sweat, and drinking pots of beer between the shovellings (English beer of course).

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS HARDY.

P.S.—Yes: everybody seems to be reading *The Dynasts* just now—at least, so a writer in the *Daily News* who called here this morning tells me.—T. H.

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